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# THE CRESSET

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE, THE ARTS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS



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# THE CRESSET

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## *IN THE DECEMBER CRESSET:*



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THE CRESSET

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# Notes and Comment

BY THE EDITORS

## At Year's End

WITHIN a few weeks 1948 will be rolled up to join the years and centuries of history. For the world, 1948 was a year of trouble in Berlin, in Palestine, and in China, a year of hunger and bickering and strife. For our own country, 1948 was marked by the clatter of political conventions, a rowdy presidential campaign, and a surprise election. But it was also marked by a runaway inflation which each segment of our national population blamed on other segments, but which everyone seemed to be enjoying too much to check.

The thoughts that occupy the minds of most Americans as they bid farewell to 1948 will hover chiefly over these subjects and over the significance of these events for America's future—and for mine. No time is more suited than the end of the year for a review of the past and a resolution for the future, and such meditation has become traditional for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Radio comedians and newspaper columnists vie with each other in producing lists of silly resolutions for the New Year.

Another feature that characterizes the commemoration of the New Year in America is the traditional New Year's Eve party. Despite the ranting of moralists and the criticisms of common sense, we have always seen in the New Year's Eve party an indication that America's easy conscience is more a matter of affectation than of conviction. Once a year at least, when confronted by the record of the past and the prospects of the future, Americans

admit to themselves and to others that they are in need of solace and comfort—and of forgiveness.

For the only theme which any sensitive spirit can give to a consideration of the end of the year is forgiveness, the need of forgiveness for the sins of the past and the need for forgiveness in the year that is about to begin. Despite the ease with which we have sinned against both God and man in the past year, despite the smugness of our assurance that God does not mind our pride and sin, the last evening of the year gives us an opportunity to be frank with ourselves and to admit that during 1948 we have sinned gravely and are sorely in need of forgiveness.

Hence the drinking and the celebration on New Year's Eve. In the light of the passing years and of the eternity that broods above them our pretensions and our pride stand under judgment, and on one night of the year at least we cannot escape the haunting presence of our sins and offenses. Boast as we will of our virtues and superiority, even the most rabid will admit on New Year's Eve that Americans, too, have reason to look to God in repentance and sorrow as another year closes.

As 1948 draws to a close, Americans may well take the opportunity it provides for introspection and self-denunciation, looking for forgiveness to Him from whom every good and perfect gift proceeds.

## Soviet Profanity

A RECENT issue of *Pravda* lying before us on the desk contains the usual Soviet denunciations of the Marshall Plan, President Truman, and everything else Western.

The usual Soviet vocabulary is there, too—bourgeois, feudal, capitalistic, Fascist, kulaks, etc. With an almost pathetic effort to force everything into a preconceived pattern, the editorial writers of *Pravda* unite with the reporters in interpreting all phenomena of contemporary political, social, and economic life in terms of *Das Kapital.*

The present issue is devoted largely to problems of culture and philosophy. Reviewing the present "decadence" in Western literature and thought, it traces French existentialism as well as the obscenity of American novels to the ills of capitalism, and it links present trends in American literature to what it regards as parallel tendencies in the German literature of the thirties. Thus American literature bears our *Pravda's* thesis that America is well on the way to Fascism.

But a new epithet has been

added. In addition to the shop-worn curse words mentioned earlier, Soviet profanity has acquired a new word: *idealist.* Apparently the very mention of the term makes any dialectical materialist's hair stand on end; we wonder how any loyal linotype operator could have been persuaded to set the infamous word.

Personally, we were a little shocked to see "Fascist" and "idealist" used in such close conjunction. It seemed somewhat incongruous. But what does it matter, incongruous or otherwise, when the Party has spoken?

We only wonder whether America's fellow-travelers will adopt this bit of Soviet profanity, too, and whether "Fascist dog" and "idealist" will be used interchangeably in America's Red press.

## Jumping the Gun

THERE are many things about America's celebration of the birth of Christ that are garish and in very poor taste, not the least being the commercialization of Christmas by department store owners and other enterprising business men.

But this year commercialization seems to have hit a new low. Apparently not content with vulgarizing Christmas and the two weeks immediately preceding and following it, the stores in our city began their Christmas propaganda in the middle of November, five or six weeks before Christmas.

It is bad enough that a turkey rather than a prayer has become America's symbol of Thanksgiving. Now the symbolism of the turkey-Thanksgiving has been blended with the gilt and tinsel of our artificial Christmas to present a rude spectacle shocking even to those who do not regard Christmas as the birth of the Son of God.

Is this a sign that the post-Christmas sales will last till the beginning of February in 1949? At this rate—moving the beginning of the Christmas season back and the end of the Christmas season forward—the Christmas seasons will eventually just touch, and there will be Christmas twelve months a year.

That might be good business, but it most emphatically is not Christmas.

## The American Peasant

A RECENT Russian broadcast, intended chiefly for consumption by the people of the satellite countries, set out to describe the Thanksgiving celebration of the average American family. It portrayed the bounties which used to

bless the American table in better days, before the United States became the chief enemy of people's movements all over the world.

In 1948, the broadcast stated, things are different. The American laborer is enduring privation the likes of which the Eastern proletarian never experienced. But saddest of all is the lot of what the broadcaster called "the American peasant." Just before Thanksgiving, the commentator stated, about four million peasants were turned out of their homes into the bitter cold of the American winter by the greedy capitalists who had bought up the mortgages to their land.

The entire discussion was so sympathetic to the hard lot of the unfortunate peasants that we half expected the commentator to propose a Molotov Plan for the aid of the American peasant. All that the commentator asked for was the sympathy and tears of the Poles and Czechs for their poor brethren across the Atlantic, who are being exploited by a Fascist government and a capitalist economy and have no place to turn.

Shortly after hearing the broadcast we were invited to address a group of "American peasants" in the rural Middle West. In the parking lot outside the meeting place we counted more than fifty Buicks, in addition to many other large, new cars. After going inside we learned that the chairman of the group had come the one hundred miles from his home in his private airplane.

The poor American peasant!

## Against the Stream

IT WAS certainly a good fight while it lasted, and we surely had to admire the man for his stubborn resistance.

We do not mean President Truman. We are referring to Fred Allen, the radio comedian, and to his battle against the giveaway programs that were driving his Hooper rating down.

In an effort to fight the giveaway programs, Mr. Allen took out insurance. If anyone, by listening to his program, missed the opportunity to win a prize on one of the Santa Claus programs competing with him, Mr. Allen was prepared to make up the loss up to five thousand dollars. Thus, one could listen to Fred Allen in complete protection against loss by absenteeism.

After making this offer at the beginning of each program for several weeks, Mr. Allen has withdrawn it—not because he or the insurance company has run out of money, but because there have been no legitimate claims. No one has been able to establish that he

failed to win a prize because he was listening to the Fred Allen show.

Mr. Allen might congratulate himself by saying that his listeners are of such an intellectual caliber that they are not selected for giveaway programs. A more realistic appraisal of the situation, we tearfully suggest, is that Fred Allen has been swimming against the stream. What draws people to giveaway programs is not merely the acquisitive urge. It is the same thrill that comes in roulette or at the races. And no insurance policy can provide a guarantee against that thrill.

# The PILGRIM

*"All the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."* —PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

BY O. P. KRETZMANN

## A Christmas Letter

DEAR SON:

I hardly know how to begin my Christmas letter this year. . . . Yesterday it was long after midnight when I finally got to bed and this morning I was wide awake before dawn. . . . Quietly I went downstairs to make some coffee and to listen to the man from New York who talks about war and trouble and hate over the radio every morning before the music comes. . . . At the end of his report—"no change in the Berlin crisis"—"fighting continues in Palestine"—a man from Chicago said that heavy snow was falling in Iowa and Wisconsin and that before night it would come to our town. . . . Perhaps, I thought, the coming of the snow, as every year, would give me a chance to think about Christmas. . . . I tried it last week when the big white reindeer appeared on State Street and the windows of the stores turned red and green and gold overnight, but somehow the real Christmas is so far away from gold and silk and toys that I could think of nothing but the people for whom also this Christmas would be only the memory of loss and the present hurt of loneliness. . . . Only tonight, with the rain and snow against our windows, can I remember how it really was . . . the winter silence, the stars at midnight, the Mother and Child, the quiet animals, the light and men following. . . . This is the way it was. . . . The way God wanted it and wants it even now. . . . This is the way Christmas was—and is—far, infinitely far, from the radio and State Street. . . .

Sometimes I try to imagine what things will be like when you finally read these Christmas letters. . . . There are some friends of mine, good servants of the Child, who say that we are now living in the last times, and that you and I will have to look forward to the great and final years

of storm over the earth. . . . Perhaps they are right . . . it really looks that way this November night in 1948 . . . the reaping of the bitter harvest, the whips of judgment. . . . There is an air of finality about them . . . more than a touch of the cosmic and eternal. . . . The universe trembles, and who will deny that it may be due to the coming of His feet? . . .

But I do not believe that you ought to think very much about that . . . and certainly not worry over it. . . . Our peering over God's shoulder to see what He is doing is one of the things that He lets us do because He is our Father. . . . We understand just as little of it, however, as you do when you stand at my desk and look over the edge to see what I am doing. . . . He is forever our Father and we are forever His children, and so we shall always be a little puzzled about His plans for the world. . . . No matter how long you live and how wise you may become, you will always be standing at the edge of time and history looking up . . . and if only you continue to look up you will be all right. . . .

Besides, Christmas for all your years will never depend on what is happening in the world. . . . That's one great thing about it. . . . It is a deep, inner, personal secret between God and you . . . a great and mysterious thing. . . . Perhaps, when you read this, you will remember that sometimes, when the day is clear, you and I walked down the street to the hill to watch the big trains go by and see the sun go down over the valley and the stars come out one by one. . . . Now the great and strange mystery about Christmas is that God who lit the stars and threw the planets whirling into space and built the quiet hills and set the seas in their places became, suddenly, one night at midnight, in a stable, a little Baby . . . smaller, much smaller, than you are now . . . utterly helpless and dependent upon His Mother. . . . You could have picked Him up in your arms that night. . . . You could have felt His tiny heart beating . . . small, yet already great enough to love the world . . . large enough to take all of us in . . . ready, even on that night, to be the target for a spear . . . so that you and I might have Christmas.

And so Christmas will always be an inner mysterious thing . . . something that can really be most at home in the hearts of children. . . . When you read this, you will be growing up and you will be for a few years ashamed of childish things. . . . That is only natural—we have all passed through that time of life. . . . The pity of it is that some people never get over it. . . . They grow up to be

smart rather than wise, sophisticated rather than intelligent, and in their tragic hurry to put away some of the childish things which all of us must set aside with the maturing years, they put away too the great things they ought to keep, especially at Christmastime, the wonder and faith, the simple joy of the simple heart, the gift of believing. . . . A few weeks ago I saw what Francis Thompson has written in his essay on Shelley: "Know you what it is to be a child? It is to be something very different from the man of today. It is to have a spirit yet streaming from the waters of baptism; it is to believe in love, to believe in loveliness, to believe in belief; it is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ear; it is to turn pumpkins into coaches, and mice into horses, lowness into loftiness, and nothing into everything, for each child has its fairy godmother in its own soul; it is to live in a nutshell and to count yourself the king of infinite space."

"A spirit yet streaming from the waters of baptism" . . . that is the only way you can come to Christmas . . . because your baptism was really your first touch of Christmas. . . . The Child gave Himself to you, freely, without any doing on your part. . . . As quietly and willingly as He was born into the world so He was also born in your heart . . . because He wanted to be . . . and only children in spirit and mind, the pure in heart, can know His coming and hear his crying over the world. . . .

Do you remember that last year I told you about the animals who kneel at midnight on Christmas Eve when nobody can see them? . . . Some time after that I found a song that they are supposed to sing when their moment of adoration comes. . . . Of course, older people will not understand that. . . . Animals do not sing. . . .

Perhaps not . . but who knows? . . . You may hear them in your dreams on Christmas Eve. . . . After all, the Baby in the manger was the best thing they ever saw. . . . At any rate, I am sure you will like the spirit of the song they sing. . . . Many men have not done as well. . . .

Small One, we have no melodies
To sing tonight for You.
We cannot think of tune and words
As men, our brothers do.

But listen to our singing blood
Like wine within our veins
Come surging like a carillon
Up through our hapless brains.

And do accept the gift we give—
The brawn we lend to men
That all your wide and wintry world
May sing, come Spring again.

Our fathers tell us every year
The tale their fathers told

About the starlight and the Maid,
The stable and the cold.

And even though to dust we go,
Our bones shall sing in death
That once upon a Christmastime
We warmed You with our breath.

Something like that must always be in your heart when Christmas comes . . . holy, humbly, and infinitely wise. . . . And then He will be born again in your heart, as He has always been in all men who have not lost the meaning of His coming. . . . The trembling star will always look down upon this miracle. . . . And even though men still weave a crown of thorns for Him and His manger drips with red, you can always have the kindled star and the waiting heart. . . . This year you will try to sing some of the songs of Christmas for the first time. . . . When you read this, you may remember that you were never singing alone, not even when you were very small. . . . In fact, you and I and everyone else are singing only the second voice. . . . The melody is carried by cherubim and seraphim, just as it was on the first holy night . . . and now by saints who have stood at the manger . . . have looked down and up and around . . . and have seen earth and heaven touch, drawn together by little hands, joined in an everlasting song. . . . For a few more years our singing may be harsh and broken, but the Holy Child loves it nevertheless. . . . He waits to hear it from the halls of heaven and He will continue to wait until He gives us too, as He has given so many before us, a better voice and a greater song. . . . What more can you ask of Him? . . .

# The Christmas Garland

*By* THE CRESSET ASSOCIATES

## Crowded Out

THERE was no room in the inn. Earlier arrivals had filled it to capacity, and no wonder, for the small-town hostelry was not built to accommodate such an influx of strangers as came to Bethlehem in those days. It was fortunate that there still *was* room in the stable. And, after all, the difference between inn and stable was not so great as we, judging by our conditions, are likely to think. Both had an earthen floor; neither provided beds. There was more privacy in the stable, less bustle, crowding, and noise. So there was He born who is the hope and consolation of the world. The guests in the inn gave Him no room in their thoughts; they were busy with their personal problems, with talk about travel experiences, about taxes, about oppression, about Herod and the Roman overlords. They were not at fault in this: for how could they know that the miracle of the ages was taking place so near them?

But how is it with us? We know that God is born into our flesh, that by becoming one of us He has healed the ancient breach between heaven and earth, that because of His coming the cherubim have sheathed the flaming sword, to give us free access to the tree of Life. Have *we* room for the Son of God in our lives—such room as becomes Him? Do we give Him the room that we ought, in our thoughts, our affections, our pleasures, our plans and our hopes? Or do we harbor such a throng

of worldly interests and loves and cares, yes, and of sins, that there is only a little out-of-the-way place left for Him—say on Sunday mornings and in a perfunctory evening prayer? Have we really room for the incarnate God, for His love, His salvation, His gift of unending life?

## "And When the Fullness of Time Was Come"

A STAR sent forth its light into a world of darkness.

Love Incarnate came to earth to dwell amid rampant lovelessness.

Divine kindness shone from an Infant's face while evil walked the earth.

Hospitality personified appeared, though there was no room for Him in the inn.

The Light of the world sent forth its rays and the darkness could not put it out.

The Grace of God condescended to men burdened by the Law.

The Wisdom of God came when man's philosophy had bankrupted.

The Good Shepherd walked the earth when the sheep had all gone astray.

The Great Physician healed when the lepers on the highways and byways cried: "Unclean! Unclean!"

The true High Priest appeared when false priests had turned His Father's House into a den of thieves.

The Prince of Peace came when every man's hand was turned against his brother.

The Great Teacher taught men whose wisdom had become foolishness.

The world's Savior came to a world lost in sin.

The Redeemer came for men who were slaves of the Evil One.

The Son of God came when the gods of men were dead.

## The Road to Bethlehem

THE town of Bethlehem where the Savior, the Christ and Lord, was born, was but a short distance from the fields where the shepherds kept watch over their flock. They footed it in less than an hour. Yet to get there, they had to journey in a night which must have seemed to them blacker than jet for their eyes were still blinded by the dazzling brightness of the glory of God. They had to hurdle fences and hedges. And there was the search for an infant in the animal sheds of Bethlehem, their only clues being "a child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

For the Magi, Bethlehem was

far, far away, some four hundred miles. These Magi, too, found traveling difficult. There were robbers on the highway. There were the arid desert lands they had to cross. There was that shocking ignorance in the king's palace in Jerusalem. Not even the king and his court knew that the King of the Jews had been born. And there was palpitation in the hearts of these Magi whether they would be able to find the new-born King when they got to Bethlehem.

The road to Bethlehem is still an arduous road. Many there are in this season of the year who once again start out on this road. But they will never reach Bethlehem. They will never find the Christ. Many there are who will make the mistake of thinking they reached Bethlehem and saw the Child because they were touched by a bit of childhood memory of Christmas, or by a color picture shot of Bethlehem, or by a bit of sentimental poetic fancy such as "Jingle Bells." Many there are who are looking for Bethlehem in department stores, who are equating the manger with a basket of food intended for some unfortunate neighbor as a Christmas gift, or who are identifying Santa Claus with the Christ-child.

To reach Bethlehem, one must follow the shepherds. No questioning on their part when they heard the angel's message and the angelic chorus. No huddle and hesitation, no concern about the sheep, no fear of the night. But we hear them saying in concert, "Let us be off to Bethlehem and see this thing that the Lord made known to us." For them Bethlehem was near and the road smooth in spite of the darkness of the night, in spite of fences and hedges, in spite of scanty clues. Or follow the Magi. They saw the star in the east, and they followed the star. They, too, asked no questions. They did no checking and cross-checking in the ancient sacred books. No loitering on the way. But they started out resolutely, took the shortest route to Bethlehem, and found the Child.

Oh, to find Bethlehem. Once more to kneel before that child with penitent heart and to confess, "Thou hast redeemed me, a lost and condemned sinner, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil." Once more to know that this child is above all. To know that even in His lowly poverty He towers as a mighty Everest above all humans, above all angels, above cherubim and seraphim. To know once again that this child belongs to that glorious, holy Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, of one substance and of majesty co-equal. Once more to see in this child not only the Babe

of Bethlehem, but also the Lamb of Calvary, the High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, and the returning Lion of Judah. Oh, to know in these trying days that this child is above all, the Lord of men and angels, the Lord of all worlds, the Lord of time and space, the Lord of heaven and eternity, the Lord of all.

"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see the thing which is come to pass which the Lord hath made known unto us."

"And they came with haste."

## The Zemach in a Monastery Garden

OF THE mystical references to the Christ-child contained in prophecy there is none more beautiful than *the Branch.* It occurs in the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah. The ancient royal line of David is compared to a stump to all appearances destined to rot in the ground. But a strange thing happens. Out of the stem of Jesse (father of David) a Branch would grow up. The Virgin Mary of Nazareth, and by another line, her betrothed, Joseph, both people in humble circumstances, were the remnant of the royal house of David which fostered *the Branch* who was to become the Savior of the world. This is the ancient mystical prophecy of the *Zemach,* Hebrew for a shoot or sprig.

At Zinna in the Province of Brandenburg there was during the Middle Ages an illustrious monastery of the Cistercian Monks, one of the offshoots of the French order which sought to revive the strict monastic rule of the Benedictines, stressing manual labor, agriculture, and colonization. The 200 Cistercian monasteries of Germany have long ceased to exist, their establishments today mostly ruins or only names and only a few, like that of Zinna, today tell of the great work of colonization once performed by them. The chronicles of this cloister tell of the origin of that lovely old Christmas chant —"Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen."

It was late in the fall of the year, the exact date being unknown. A light blanket of snow had covered the still green carpet of lawn between the domicile of the monks and the church of the cloister. A monk was hurrying from his cell to the church for the midnight service where the Lauds were to be offered as they were customary in the Cistercian order, when his eye was arrested by a tiny flower peeping through the snow, the light from a window falling on it and casting its radiance over the scene. This rare view gave him an inspiration. He

was so vividly reminded of the branch growing out of the root of the Stem of Jesse. Changing the German word, "Reiss," the word for "branch," to the word, "Rose," with poetic license, he hurried back to his cell after the service and penned his thoughts into the beautiful hymn, *"Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen Aus einer Wurzel zart."* The English version hardly does justice to the beautiful German original.

Behold a branch is growing
Of loveliest form and grace
As prophets sung, foreknowing;
It springs from Jesse's race
And bears one little Flower
In midst of coldest winter,
At deepest midnight hour.

The time when the monk saw the beautiful little flower peeping through the snow inspired the words of the first stanza. The original hymn is mainly addressed to Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary being the patron saint of the Cistercian order, all the churches of that order being dedicated to her. The monk thought Mary was the rose. In our hymnal the necessary correction has been made, the rose being the Christ-child.

This is the brief story of the origin of the hymn as told by the pastor of the church at Zinna to Dr. H. A. Koch, now of Manitowoc, Wis. He adds the following meditation:

Gone is the splendor of the once famous Cistercian order, sparse are the remnants even in Koster Zinna, but the hymn once conceived on the way to a midnight service and penned by a monk, whose name remains unknown, has come down to us through the centuries, ever again inspiring us in the beautiful Advent and Christmas season, thrilling us with its melodious tune, calling our attention to the prophecy of Isaiah, which found its fulfillment in the Christ-child given to Virgin Mary "at midnight calm and still." The hymn is an inspiration of a memorable night in the life of an unknown monk yearning for "that endless day in the courts of Heaven."

## No Room in the Inn

St. Luke's account of the Nativity begins by pointing to the events which marked God's fullness of time. Then the narrative proceeds toward the climax, the appearance of the angelic hosts on the plains of Bethlehem. But the continuity of its hope and joy inspiring tone is broken, as it were, by the Evangelist with the words, "there was no room for them in the inn."

No room for Jesus has been and is today the world's greatest trag-

edy. Those people in Bethlehem to whom the returning shepherds made known what they had heard and seen on that memorable first Christmas night merely wondered at those things which were told them, but in their hearts was no room for the Savior. Herod had no room for Him; and later during His public ministry our Lord encountered many who refused Him a place in their hearts. The pages of history throughout the centuries reveal that the great tragedies in human experiences are based on the fact that men had no room for Jesus.

When we look about us today, we observe much evidence that Jesus is crowded out of the hearts of men. Among these are the increasing commercialization of Christmas and the orgies and revelries which mark many Christmas celebrations in homes and public places. These are "No vacancy" placards with which men barricade their hearts to the Savior who stands at their door seeking admission.

Christmas of 1948 is approaching. What reception will we give the Savior by our observation of the anniversary of His blessed birth? May the Spirit of God move us to make room for the noble Guest; may He find posted on the doors of our hearts a placard inscribed with Luther's beautiful welcome:

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.

## The Mighty Bulwark

THE message which comes to us with special emphasis during the Christmas season is not *of* this world; it is *for* this world. It is a message of love, peace, courage, and everlasting joy.

The Angel of the Lord chose a group of lowly shepherds as the first to hear the glad tidings that the Son of God had become the Son of Man. It is no less significant that wise and wealthy men came from far away to bow down before the King of kings.

Although the message of the Babe of Bethlehem is by no means *of* this world, it is, thank God, still proclaimed *in* this world.

Many men, women, and children overlook the core of the Christmas message and celebrate the most popular of all holidays in a spirit of out-and-out worldliness, it is true; yet we can be sure that the very word "Christmas" is bound to stir up thoughts of Him for whom the festival is named.

The world needs to be directed toward Christ and His message of love, peace, courage, and everlasting joy. Hard-bitten foes of the

Savior—foes who declare that milk and honey will flow for all in equalized abundance if and when the teachings of Karl Marx reign supreme—are working in the open and in secret, with brazenness and by subtle means, to banish Christ from this earth. We have Christ's own assurance that He will be with us until the end of time; but those who minimize the strength and the cunning of Christ's foes, who see no need to watch and to pray, and who are neither hot nor cold are, in point of fact, giving aid and comfort to Christ's sworn enemies.

Christmas is indeed a time for rejoicing; but let us bear in mind that it is likewise a season for serious reflection. If there were no Christmas message, the world would be utterly without hope. Then those who have already deprived many countries and millions of human beings of liberty would have far less opposition to their determined attempts to foist upon their fellow men a freedom-strangling way of life. As it is, the followers of the Savior are erecting the most formidable bulwark against the assaults of deluded and fanatical men—men whose ultimate aim is world revolution for atheism and for the stifling tenets of Marx.

## Christmas Peace

Is PEACE an anachronism? It might almost seem so, as the spirit of vengeance and intolerance and oppression continues to stalk the face of the earth in this "post-war" era. But into our distraught, weary world comes again the spirit of the Prince of Peace to assure the children of men that peace is not a fantasy, not a delusion, not a ghost of bygone days nevermore to be recaptured, but that peace—even in this grim and anxious Today—is the most real and most precious treasure of the human soul. For at Christmas we hear again the ageless song of the herald angels over Bethlehem's fields, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." And perhaps the very fact that our Christmas celebration this year finds the world faced with uncertainty and bent on atomic destruction will cause us to hear a bit more clearly the angels' melody of peace and to understand a bit more truly the olden Christmas prophecy, "His name shall be called . . . the Prince of Peace."

For the peace which Christ, the Prince of Peace, brought to mankind that first Christmas morning and which He has bequeathed to His followers for all the ages of time is not a material, earthly peace, but a spiritual, heavenly

peace; not a peace for the body, but a peace for the soul; not a peace for any short and limited duration of time, but a peace that will last to all eternity; not a peace dependent upon the whims and ambitions of earthly rulers, but a peace guaranteed by the solemn pledge of a sovereign God; not a peace contracted by any earth-bound alliance, but a peace established between God and man and sealed in the red blood that flowed on Calvary—that peace of heart and soul and conscience that assures us that we are the children of God; that peace which enables us to rise above the sorrows and trials of this sin-burdened life; that peace which sets our affections upon things eternal, those things that shall never pass away, even though all creation should totter and crash 'round about our ears. That is the peace concerning which Christ Himself declared, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

That is the peace of which the Christmas angels sang. That is the peace of which Christ has become the Prince. That is the peace that the Christmas evangel brings into our hearts. And that is the peace that, in a world of tears and worry and hate, can make us happy and hopeful—and victorious.

# The Surprise of Christmas

In the silence and holiness of Christmas Eve men everywhere will gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. It is good that they should do so, that at least once a year their hearts might know the joys of children, open-mouthed and amazed at the mystery of the God made flesh.

More and more in recent years men have become sensitive to the wide gulf that separates the first Christmas from the Christmases we celebrate. Not only the external differences between New York and Bethlehem, between the luxury and warmth of our homes and the crudeness and cold of the manger. There is a more profound difference than that.

We seem to miss much of the meaning of Christmas because we know that it is coming. For months ahead we prepare for it, with buying and baking and bustling. It is marked in red on our calendars and we set it aside in the programs of our businesses, schools, and churches. Children are taught to expect Christmas and its gifts and to look forward to it. All the advertising companies have been busy for months plotting their Christmas campaigns, and our radios have been droning "White Christmas" night and day.

And so it is no surprise to anyone when Christmas comes. One has only to read the Christmas story in the Gospels to note the suddenness of it all, the moment when all nature and all humanity held its breath as God stepped down into human form: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

It was all so unexpected. In the palace of Herod there was consternation, in the inn there was no room, and even in the heavens there was excitement. No preparations, no elaborate fixings, no tinsel, no holly—only the Mother and the Child and the shepherds and the angels. Not as the dawn creeps up on the world, with a

pink light here and a streak there heralding the morning—not like that did He come. But—

How silently, how silently, the wondrous Gift is given;
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.

## What's Wrong with Christmas?

But what is wrong with the Christmas we celebrate in America? All the children's eyes are shining and everyone seems to be happy. There is good cheer and fellowship, and even the policemen seem to be touched by the spirit of the season. Surely this is Christmas.

Or is it? It sometimes seems as though all of this is as far from Christmas as possible. For the only way we can make the difference between the first Christmas and this Christmas less painful is to bring back the surprise and the breathlessness of Christmas. That means that any part of Christmas we expect and know is coming cannot be its real meaning. Trees and gifts, lights and tinsel, Santa Claus and carols—all these may have their place, but they will not reduce the aching void between Christmas as it was when the Child was born and Christmas as it is when men gather to sing that the Child was born.

Christmas will mean tragically little to me unless it is something intensely personal for me, unless the light of the Christmas star shines to me and for me, unless above the night and the darkness of this world I can see the light of His face—yes, unless I can see His light shining even above the lights of this world. For a light can be seen easily in the darkness; it is harder to see in the light. We must come as did the Magi: "For we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him," and we must see the star shining brightly over the lights of the trees and the neon signs. Only then will Christmas be ours.

Another way we masquerade Christmas is to think of it first of all as something between people: the family comes together from various parts of the country, I give you a present and you give me one, as though these horizontal relationships were what makes Christmas. What makes Christmas is not men, but God; not the fact that our family is together, but that in the Gift of Christmas He is given to us in whom the whole family of heaven and earth is named. Christmas is more than a family reunion because in it God tore open the heavens and came down the ladder of heaven with a Child in His arms and gave the Child to men that through Him they might receive the eternal sonship of God.

If Christmas has lost its flavor and its taste, it is time we look

deep into our hearts to find out what we are looking for in Christmas. A Christmas of people is no Christmas at all. The true meaning of Christmas is in the condescension of God, stooping down to help the children of men, bending low to light the candles of His mercy that those who have wandered far and alone and whose feet are bruised with the stones of a hundred paths might be guided to the rest of His eternal mansions.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us—an eternal surprise! Into the cheapness and the shallowness, the dirt and the filth of our world He deigns to come and be born. Men were looking for Him in palaces; He came in a manger. Today men look for Him and His security in military might, and He comes in the heart of a Child to grant His peace. Men sat in Athens and in Rome disputing over profound and learned books, and He was born in the uneducated and illiterate masses of the Empire. Today men seek wisdom and knowledge in the laboratory and the library, while the wisdom that cometh down from above is to be had in the mewing of a Babe in Bethlehem long ago and far away.

## The Burning Light

The trouble with Christmas as we celebrate it is that we think of it as something soft and sweet, when Christmas is hard reality—so hard and so real that it hurts. Just because Christmas is a shock to every proud and overbearing thought, men take refuge in sentimentality. It is not pleasant to hear that men were in such a state that only the coming of God into the flesh could redeem them: "Unto you is born this night in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord." But why a Savior except for sin and hell and death?

Christmas comes to tell us that except for Christmas and its Gift we are lost. People prefer not to hear that, and so they run to Santa Claus and sweetness and light, all in the vain hope of saving their pride and coming out unscathed. We need Christmas to tell us that our lights and our shining candles are weak and useless, and that only He who is the true light can shine in our world to drive away its darkness. If Christmas is only a brighter light, but still just another light, then there is no point to it at all. But Christmas is a new and a different light, brighter and better and stronger so that all our light becomes darkness in comparison. It comes to tell us to throw away all our little lights, for the eternal Light has come to claim our loyalties and our hearts. And when the Sun of righteousness is shining,

let the candles of unrighteousness be snuffed out and let every knee adore Him who came in the flesh to redeem our flesh.

For those who come with humble hearts, Christmas can be a source of eternal blessing. On that silent and holy night the darkness of human life was pierced by the light of heaven, and upon the night of our hearts the dawn of eternal glory has begun to shine. Christians of all centuries unite their wonder in the words of the ancient collect:

O God, who hast made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light, grant, we beseech Thee, that, as we have known on earth the mysteries of that Light, we may also come to the fulness of its joys in heaven: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# THE ASTROLABE

By
THEODORE GRAEBNER

## THE SIDEWALKS OF PARIS

We were sitting up late in the lounge of the S.S. *America* and conversation drifted to a comparison between some of the world's great cities. Some of the globe trotters in the group had seen Shanghai and Constantinople, most of them had been in Rome and Stockholm, all had been in Paris and there was mutual agreement on the proposition that for city planning from the standpoint of harmonious design and great sweep of city vistas, nothing in the world surpasses the beauty of Paris.

"There is no city like it in the planning of its overall picture," said one of the passengers. "And it is due to the fact that long ago a law was made by the city fathers that buildings in Paris must be the height of the roof of Notre Dame Cathedral."

This was met by references to the great nave of the cathedral lifted up above the surrounding buildings, as most of us remembered the sight from the Henry IV Bridge.

At any rate, one may well ask, where is the city that has a uniform height of its houses, and that a height of seven stories? In some of the older parts of the city in which the houses were built on very spacious lines, with rooms generally twelve feet in height, the number of stories would be five, but the height of the houses the same. You walk miles and miles from the River Seine in any direction and of the hundreds of streets that you cross there is none that does not give you a vista of houses seven stories in height and all built of a gray limestone. There are no alleys. There are no vacant lots. The blocks are solid

walls of houses. The seventh story is invariably an attic with the Mansard slope, with dormers jutting out. How it is possible to maintain an equal roof line throughout the older city of Paris with all the old construction, much of it dating from the Sixteenth Century, passes comprehension; but the impression is one of magnificent repose. There are no blocks in which houses one and two stories high stand alongside structures of six, eight, or ten stories. There are no sky scrapers, and you must walk to the outskirts of the city before you enter areas with irregular roof lines.

In the midst of this tremendous mass of buildings there stand out only the towers of ancient churches and the Eiffel Tower. At certain points the slopes of Montmartre begin, crowned by the great church of Sacre Coeur. From the airplane, seen in the level rays of the setting sun, this is a picture quite out of this world.

## CITY PLANNING DE LUXE

To plan miles and miles of broad boulevards cutting rhomboids and diagonals across a large city is unheard of in any of the world's metropolises except Paris. Remember that this city was a huddle of narrow and crooked streets with hardly a straight stretch more than a hundred feet in length at the end of the Middle Ages, and that during the past 450 years it has been laid out in broad regular squares, a system of tremendous boulevards allowing vistas miles in length.

Opposite the Eiffel Tower there was on the banks of the Seine a building which housed exhibits during the 1900 World's Fair, the *Trocadero*. It was much along the lines of the Chicago World's Fair, completely out of harmony with the rest of the river bank, and because this mixture of styles set the tone for a large area of central Paris the city tore it down and leveled off the ground for new structures, now almost completed. These house the Museum of Man, and a series of long flights of stairs leads to the river bank. When you are at the top of this embankment you view through the lower arch of the Eiffel Tower, perfectly framed though a mile distant, the War College of France.

Even so when you stand on the Place Clemenceau there is an unbroken view across the Alexander II Bridge to the far off Dome des Invalides, under which is Napoleon's tomb.

In a perfect line beginning at the central court of the Louvre looking through the little Arch of

Triumph you see beyond the Tuileries gardens the Obelisk on the Place Concorde and beyond it the broad avenue Champs Elysees, and at the far end of the vista, Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe.

This great Obelisk, moved from Egypt to Paris more than a hundred years ago and placed in the center of the Place Concorde, is also in perfect line, in another direction, with the Madeleine Church and the Chamber of Deputies, where the parliament of the Republic meets.

All the great boulevards which intersect the city in every direction have broad driveways and double rows of trees with wide sidewalks, but the Champs Elysees is in a class by itself. There is a sidewalk on each side so wide that eight rows of tables in front of restaurants reach only to the middle of the walk. Then there are four rows of trees, a wide stretch of paving, and so down the other side, again four rows of trees, and the sidewalk. And whenever you cross this great avenue you have the view of the Obelisk, the Tuileries Gardens, and the park of the Louvre in one direction, and the Napoleonic Arch of Triumph in the other.

They must have started this tremendous city planning a long time ago. When the Louvre Palace was built back in the Sixteenth Century, their royal highnesses were offended in their artistic sentiment by a building standing across the street, not fronting parallel to the street, however, but at a considerable angle. This was a large and beautiful court of justice done in Gothic style. For some time the proposal of having the building wrecked was under consideration, when an unknown genius proposed that a church of the same dimensions be erected, also at an angle to the street, in this way creating a triangle—the street, the courthouse and the new church, St. Germain l' Auxerrois. At the head of the triangle, between the two buildings, a beautiful lone-standing tower was placed for a perfect point of culmination of the architectural group. Thus it stands today, and from the tower I heard the matin bells which on August 24, 1572, gave the signal for the murder of the Protestants of Paris.

The planning of long vistas has been carried out in recent changes within the Louvre. This great museum today houses the Winged Victory of Samothrace. It is resting upon a huge stone pedestal in the center of an area one hundred by one hundred feet, at the head of a stairs of more than forty steps. When this piece of sculpture bursts upon your sight, far above you, as if floating in air, the impression is quite overwhelming. Similarly they have placed

the Venus de Milo at the end of a corridor 350 feet in length, viewed through fourteen archways which give this large piece of carving a delicate and slender beauty which could be achieved in no other way.

## THE LOGIC OF THE METRO

The beautiful logical mind which is evident in the structure of the French language accounts for the perfection of the subway system of Paris.

If you were posed the problem of providing very rapid underground transportation to a large city in which there are at all times thousands of strangers with only a smattering of the French tongue and also thousands of persons in the hurrying mob that would dearly love to beat the Metropolitain out of a fare—how would you go about it? It took the logical French mind to contrive a system of passages and tunnels under ground and outlets to the streets that would make the boarding of the wrong train practically impossible and at the same time would permit none to board these trains unless they had paid their fares. And so the entrances to the system are contrived in a way that your five francs are picked up before you enter the system. After that, every one of the many underground tunnels is marked with the *final destination* of the train stopping at the platform to which this particular tunnel leads. In addition, all the stations at which the train will stop are listed on a bulletin board. Mind you, you see this before you enter the tunnel—thus saving untold millions of years of fruitless wanderings since the system was dedicated half a century ago. You come to a crossing within the tunnels and there are three, four, or five passageways leading in as many directions—every one accurately marked. You arrive at the platform and you wonder where you must stand to get the right train. Dear child, you may stand anywhere, because there is only one train stopping at this platform and that is the right one.

That is not all.

At the entrance of every station there is a large map, weatherproof and light proofed, showing the entire underground system—which covers all of Paris. So, before you go down the stairs you know which line you must seek out to reach your destination. When you are downstairs, two or four levels below the street, you have another map, identical with that on the street, where you may verify your route, if in doubt.

At the larger transfer points you have another help to aid the mental picture of your route.

Here is a map supplied with small electric bulbs, one at each station, each route in a different color. Below this map there is a tabulation, alphabetic, of all the underground stations in Paris. You find your station and you press the button. It lights up the route from the station where you are to the station you intend to reach, showing by the different color of the lights the exact points at which you must make your transfers.

When you are on the train there is within your line of vision a list of all the stations of the route you are traversing; you check off one after another, as you pass the platforms, and you find a place next to a door when your destination comes into view. Add to this that the fare has been frozen at five francs—which in the summer of 1948 was exactly one and two-thirds of a cent—and this fare carries you in fast and smooth underground transportation from one end of Paris to the other.

## TOO LOGICAL

The logic of the French mind met its Waterloo in the numbering of houses. In any other city when you are looking for number 347 Woodward Avenue and you find yourself in front of 346, you know that you must direct your path across the street where you will find the desired address. Streets are numbered this way the world over, I was told in the lounge of the S.S. *America* where we compared notes on cities we had seen. Some of the passengers had the same experience that was mine in looking for numbers on Paris streets and in telling our stories we had many a hearty laugh because of the utter absurdity of the system in vogue.

It is this way.

The inventors of the Parisian scheme of numbering streets accepted the principle that the even numbers must be on one side and odd numbers on the other. Very good. But instead of numbering the houses by feet of frontage, say twenty-five feet to the number, running ten numbers in a block of 250 feet, the Parisians numbered their *houses*. If in a block of 250 feet they would have two houses, this would mean that the first is No. 1 and the second No. 3. On the opposite side of the street there may be six houses which would mean that on that side of the street you have numbers 2 to 12. So the next block begins with No. 14 on one side of the street and No. 5 on the other. It signifies that after ten blocks your numbers are so hopelessly out of agreement that No. 65 on one side of the street may correspond to 310 on the other. This

explains why there is in existence no numbered guide to the streets of Paris.

## TAXIS AND BUSES

The average age of the Paris taxicab is about thirty years. Usually it is a Renault of the type which still has a buggy lamp on each side of the driver's seat. These taxis travel at great speed and the rates are ridiculously low, so low that one cannot understand how the system can be run at a profit. From the Place Vendome where I had my lodgings, to the Lazare Railroad Station the fare was sixty francs or twenty-one cents. Comparably the cabs in the larger cities of the United States would charge ninety cents or a dollar. The tip of forty francs made the taxi driver unmistakably happy.

They do make up for the low tariff by charging the stranger all that the traffic will bear—say ten times the amount of the tariff; say eleven hundred francs where the tariff calls for one hundred. Even when you engage your taxi in French, the attempt will be made to carry you on a round-about route, and considering the low tariff you are almost ashamed to warn the brother that he must go by *course direct.*

At the inner airport, not far from the great military school, they have a system which makes it impossible for the cab driver to mulct strangers. There is a long line of cabs lined up outside. At the door there is a desk at which you order your cab. You give your destination and the cashier turns to look up at a register of streets, locates your address in Tariff No. 2, and you pay your cab fare—with the admonition that you tip the driver.

But all the land of France is run on deficits, the politics as well as the railroads, the buses as well as the airlines, and the stranger just shakes his head and pays a cent and two-thirds for a subway trip of fifteen miles, and twenty-one cents for a taxi ride for which you are prepared to pay a dollar.

# *Music* AND MUSIC MAKERS

## *A Choir and an Organist*

By WALTER A. HANSEN

This article will deal with two concerts I heard a short time ago. I am writing about them because they illustrate, with vividness and special pertinence, some of the qualities that must go into music-making at its best.

First I shall discuss a concert presented by the Lutheran A Cappella Choir of Milwaukee. Under the direction of Hugo Gehrke this group of ardent devotees of music that is noble and uplifting sang a program of compositions which ranged from the fifteenth century to the present. The choir sang with impressive beauty and variety of tone, with careful attention to diction, with clarity of detail, and with manifest devotion.

Some writers have acquired the habit of likening the richness and the variegation of tone quality inherent in choir singing at its best to the effects produced by a fine orchestra. Unfortunately, such a comparison can lead to disastrous consequences. The tone of a choir is distinctively different from that of a group of instruments. It has its own characteristics, its own identity. If a choir strives, on purpose and on system, to imitate orchestral tone, it falls into a bottomless pit. If, on the other hand, it is guided by a man who, like Mr. Gehrke, realizes that a chorus is made up of voices of men and women and that those voices have attributes which are altogether their own, then that choir will remain in its special field and, as a result, will pay proper, pertinent, and telling attention to the specific type of tone one must look for in choir-singing.

One of the salient characteristics of the quality of the tone produced by the Lutheran A Cappella Choir of Milwaukee is its naturalness. It is never forced, never distorted. It has flexibility, variety, and many colors; but the

colors are those of human voices, not those of man-made instruments. There is, of course, no harm at all in saying, "This or that aspect of the tone of a choir reminds me of an orchestra." The danger is to be found in the fact that such a comment misleads some choir directors into striving for a tonal quality of which no choir on earth is capable. Mr. Gehrke has not fallen into that trap.

There are in this land of ours many who believe that a music critic cannot enjoy life unless he avails himself of every possible and impossible opportunity to pick flaws. Let me assure you, however, that it is always a pleasure to give warm and heartfelt approbation whenever and wherever such credit is due. Therefore I shall forego a detailed discussion of the program presented by the Lutheran A Cappella Choir of Milwaukee and pay tribute to the skill and ability of the man who directs this group of devoted and hard-working singers.

Mr. Gehrke is an able organist. I have not seen a single trace of self-importance in his attitude toward music. He has done some composing. Some time ago I had occasion to read portions of one of his orchestral scores, and as I did so it was evident to me that he has acquired praiseworthy technical skill in the complex art of instrumentation. The concert which led to the writing of this article afforded me my first opportunity to observe closely what he has accomplished as the director of a choir. Would he think of his chorus as an organ, I asked myself, and attempt to produce results entirely different from those that lie specifically within the province of a group of voices? Would he regard his choir as an orchestra and be at pains to alter the essential quality of its composite tone?

The conductor of the Milwaukee choir dealt with singers as singers, not as instrumentalists. Naturally, the broad understanding of music he has acquired by dint of industrious and self-effacing application to the organ and to other departments of the tonal art stood him in good stead as he unfolded the many types of beauty contained in the program he had constructed for the occasion; but he did not try to remove choir music from its own specific sphere —a sphere which, as every well-equipped scholar knows, is as impressive as it is vast.

**Clarity and Precision**

It was edifying to note the clarity and the precision with which Mr. Gehrke guided the singers through the linear complexities of some of the music included in the program. This was

particularly evident when he conducted the stirring fugue in Bach's majestic *Sing Ye to the Lord.*

There are choir directors whose sense of rhythm is far from keen and whose attention to accentuation lacks the necessary pertinence and sharpness. Their phrasing is woefully deficient in symmetry. Mr. Gehrke's rhythms were sharp and full of life. His accentuation was correct and pertinent. His phrasing was never out of balance. I have never heard a choir director who surpassed his deftness in controlling that much-abused musical device which is called a *ritenuto.* He should be better known in our land. Under his masterful direction the singing of the Lutheran A Cappella Choir of Milwaukee was soul-stirring. It was singing of the kind that results when a director of extraordinary ability and a fine choir work together in a spirit of humility, respect, and genuine friendship. It was singing that came from the heart and went to the heart.

Next I shall write about an organ recital. The soloist was Edouard Nies-Berger, official organist of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra and conductor of a chamber orchestra which has been eliciting much favorable comment. In a program made up of some masterpieces and a few works which deal to a far larger extent with pleasure for the ear than with heart-stirring edification Mr. Nies-Berger combined deep-probing musicianship with an uncommon mastery of the manifold technical aspects of organ-playing.

As I reveled in the skill and the chaste artistry of Mr. Nies-Berger and, at the same time, gave thought to the program he had arranged, I remembered a startling but true statement which Virgil Thomson, music critic of the New York *Herald-Tribune,* made a few years ago about music composed for the organ. I do not always see eye to eye with Mr. Thomson, and candor compels me to say that my hackles rise in good-natured dudgeon—pardon the paradox—whenever, in the course of human events, I must lend my ears to the music he writes; but I am almost completely in agreement with his assertion that "in two centuries scarcely twenty pieces have been written for the organ that could be called first-class music." I am not so sure, however, that Virgil was altogether right when he opined that "not one major composer, since Sebastian Bach died in 1750, has written for the organ with any notable freedom or authority." Much depends, you see, on whether you, Virgil, and I look upon Mendelssohn, let us say, César Franck, or Max Reger as major composers.

**Mr. Thomson's View**

Mr. Thomson believes that Mendelssohn's organ music is "a little stuffy." Brahms's chorale preludes, he thinks, are not "particularly well conceived for the instrument," and he concedes that "there are twelve organ pieces by Franck that are respectable as music." He continues:

> The rest of the post-Baroque repertory has been written by the Gounods, the Saint-Saenses, the Regers, the Viernes, the Widors, and their like—at its best, second-rate stuff by second-rate composers. Among the modern masters, only Schönberg, and that just once, has produced a work of any grandeur for the organ. *(The Art of Judging Music.* Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 1948.)

Is there "notable freedom and authority" in Marie Joseph Erb's (1858-1944) *Pastorale,* with which Mr. Nies-Berger began the second part of his program? What shall one say of Marco Enrico Bossi's (1861-1925) *St. Francis Talking to the Swallows,* of Joseph Clokey's little tone-painting entitled *Dripping Spring,* and of a brilliant *Toccata* from the pen of Leo Sowerby? These pieces are pleasing to hear, and at moments they are even exhilarating. Naturally, they require the skill of an organist as capable as Mr. Nies-Berger. But are they music which stirs one to the very quick? They are not.

What about Franck's grandiose *Chorale in A Minor,* which Mr. Nies-Berger played with notable freedom, authority, and effectiveness? Would you, Virgil, or I call it a great masterpiece—a great masterpiece which came into being after the death of Allfather Bach? To my thinking, Franck's *Chorale in A Minor* is a massive and imposing tonal structure. This is Franck at his best. The composer of the majestic *Symphony in D Minor* did not vitiate his *Chorale in A Minor* with banalities similar to those which he wove into the fabric of his *Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra;* but in this work Franck, with all the profundity of his mysticism, with all his sense of drama, and with all his authoritative workmanship, did not rise to heights as impressive as those reached by some of the composers who wrote for the organ a century and a half before his time.

The art of building organs has fared much better during the past 200 years than the art of composing for the organ. I am not trying in any way at all to belittle the ability of Franck, nor do I think that anyone should speak in a condescending manner of the fine skill of Mr. Sowerby or of the amazing facility of Reger; but I do contend that when one considers the excellent qualities of many of the organs built in our

day and, at the same time, looks carefully at the organ literature produced since the death of Bach, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that since the middle of the eighteenth century organ-building has advanced with infinitely greater strides than the art of composing for the king of instruments.

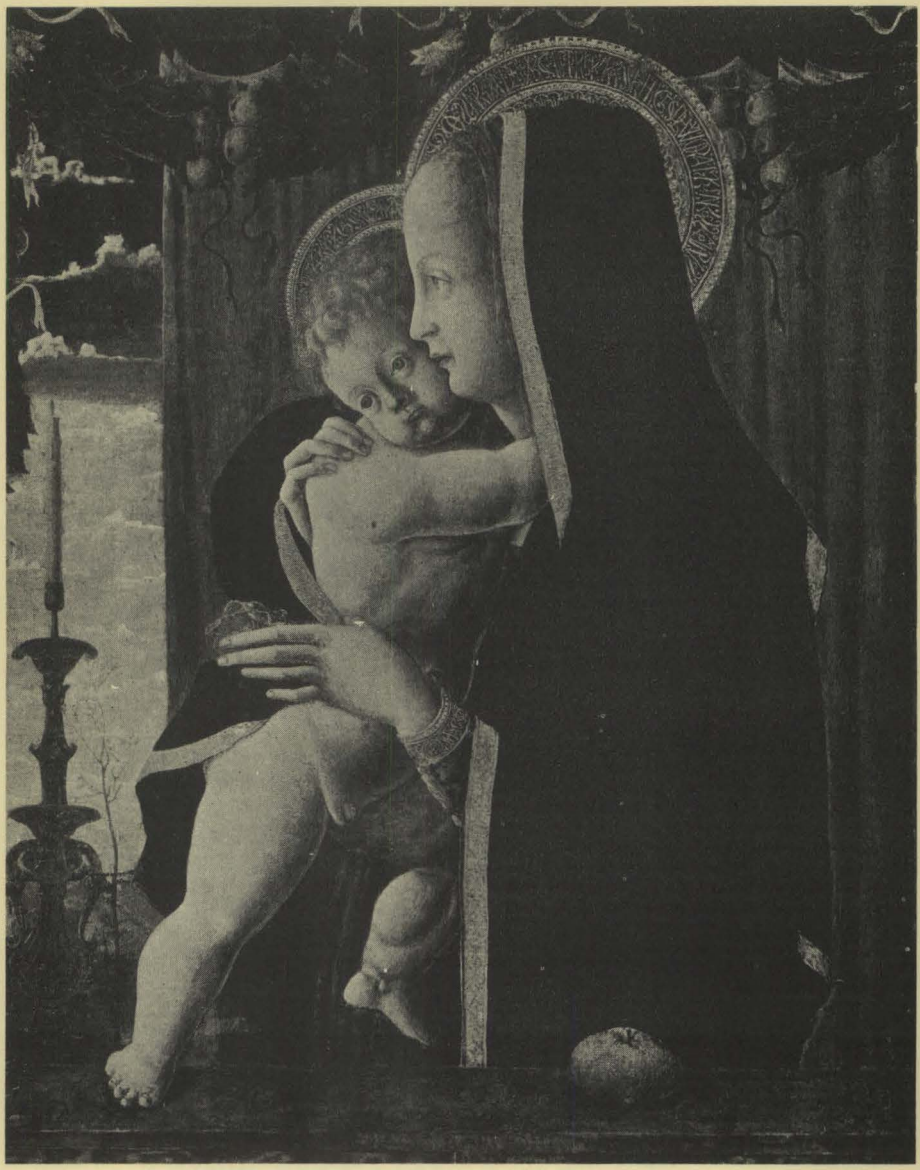
No, I am not overlooking such important writers for the organ as Charles Marie Widor and Alexandre Guilmant.

It seems illogical for a review of a concert to stress last what an artist played first. But the program I am discussing was anti-climactic in the matter of the music it contained. Mr. Nies-Berger revealed the penetrating quality of his artistry to the best advantage in his readings of the compositions which made up the first part of the fare he presented. It was a bit jarring, I know, to see Adolfo Bossi's transcription of an ear-tickling *Minuetto* from the pen of the prolific Luigi Boccherini in the company of works by such masters as Francois Couperin, George Frideric Handel, and Allfather Bach. Inconsistencies do have a subtle way of creeping into programs. But one readily overlooks them when one is confronted with artistry as refined and as comprehensive as that which Mr. Nies-Berger put into his readings of four works by the mighty Bach, one by the magnetic Handel, and one by the nimble-brained Couperin le Grand.

## RECENT RECORDINGS

SERGEI PROKOFIEFF. *Classical Symphony, Op. 25,* and *Danse Finale,* from *Chout, Ballet Suite No. 1, Op. 21.* The Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitzky. —Prokofieff has been in the Soviet doghouse for some time; but the dictatorial and hare-brained arbiters of taste and culture in Stalinland can do nothing to impair or lessen the lasting beauty of his delightful *Classical Symphony.* Dr. Koussevitzky and the Bostonians give a spirited performance of this classic. RCA Victor Album 1241.

ENRIQUE GRANADOS. *Intermezzo,* from *Goyescas.* SYLVESTRE REVUELTAS. *Sensemaya.* Leopold Stokowski and his symphony orchestra.—Stokowski is a past master of the art of producing sumptuous orchestral tone. Granados' tuneful *Intermezzo* is widely known in our land; but *Sensemaya,* from the pen of a Mexican composer who died a few



PAINTINGS FROM THE BERLIN MUSEUMS

**Madonna and Child**

by Squarcione

PAINTINGS FROM THE BERLIN MUSEUMS

**The Nativity**

by Schongauer

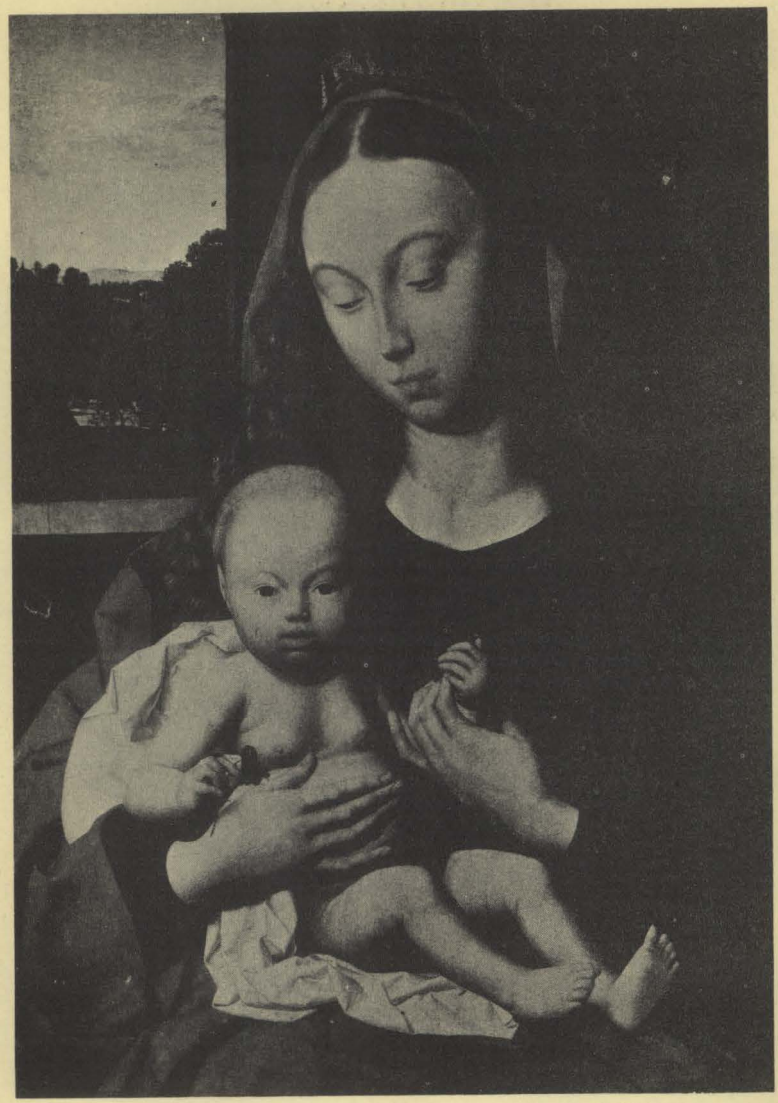
PAINTINGS FROM THE BERLIN MUSEUMS

**The Rest on the Flight into Egypt**

by Altdorfer

PAINTINGS FROM THE BERLIN MUSEUMS

**The Rest on the Flight into Egypt**
by Cranach



PAINTINGS FROM THE BERLIN MUSEUMS

**The Virgin and Child**

by Geertgen Tot Sint Jans

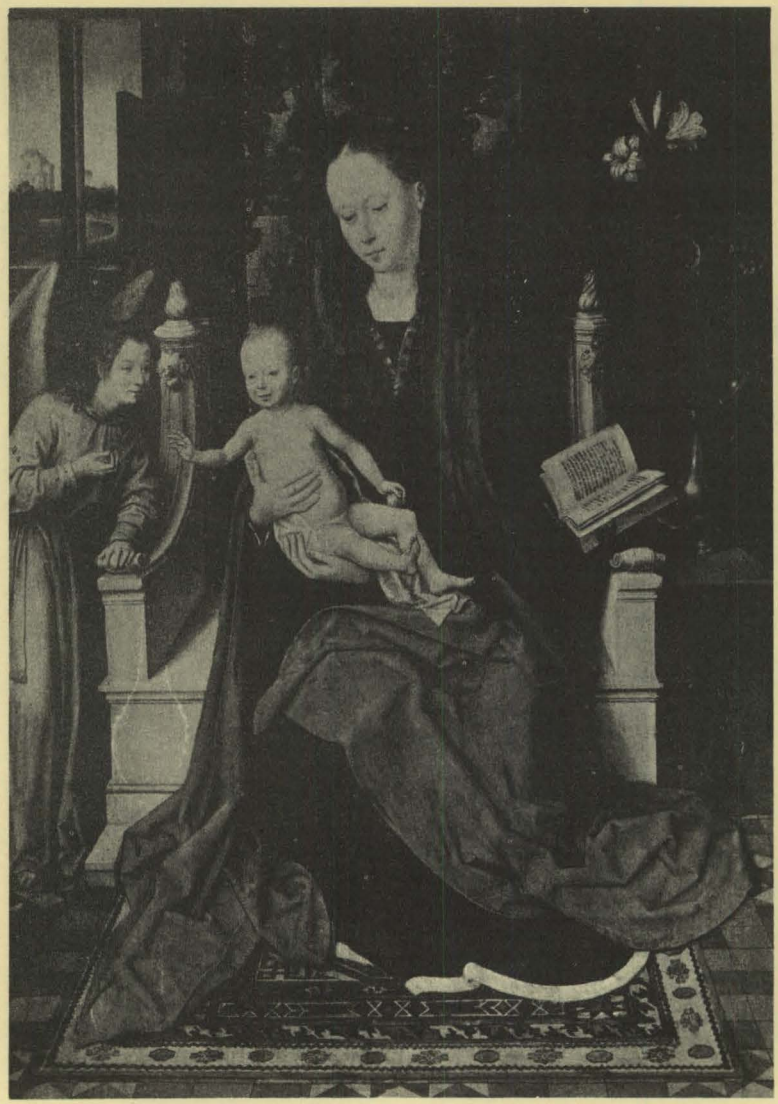
PAINTINGS FROM THE BERLIN MUSEUMS

**Madonna and Child with Saint John**
by Raphael

PAINTINGS FROM THE BERLIN MUSEUMS

**Adoration of the Magi**

by the Master of the Virgin among Virgins



PAINTINGS FROM THE BERLIN MUSEUMS

**The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Angel**
by Memling

years ago, is practically unknown. It is based on the work of a Cuban poet who dealt with the oppression and the suffering of a secret society of African Negroes. RCA Victor disc 12-0470.

RICHARD WAGNER. *Prelude* and *Love Death,* from *Tristan und Isolde.* The Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Artur Rodzinski.—The recording is excellent, but the performance lacks the intensity of previously recorded performances of this glorious music under the direction of Wilhelm Furtwängler and Leopold Stokowski. RCA Victor Album 1230.

WILLIAM KROLL. *Banjo and Fiddle.* ERICH KORNGOLD. *Garden Scene,* from incidental music to Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing.*—Jascha Heifetz, violinist, with Emanuel Bay at the piano.—Engaging music played with extraordinary skill. RCA Victor disc 12-0430.

RECORDS FOR CHILDREN. *Bambi,* from Walt Disney's *Bambi.* Told by Shirley Temple, with orchestra and chorus conducted by Paul Smith. RCA Victor Album Y-395. *Johnny Appleseed,* from Walt Disney's *Melody Time.* Told by Dennis Day with orchestra and chorus under Ken Darby. RCA Victor Album Y-368. *Pecos Bill,* from Disney's *Melody Time.* Sung and told by Roy Rogers and the Sons of the Pioneers. RCA Victor Album Y-375. *Sylvester the Seal.* Told by Eddie Mayehoff, with orchestra. RCA Victor Album Y-373. *Lore of the West.* Sung by Roy Rogers, with Gabby Hayes and the Lore of the West Singers and Orchestra. RCA Victor Album Y-394. *The Wedding of the Princess.* Narrated by Paul Wing, with Eve Young, the Guild Singers, and Thomas Lender Jones and his orchestra. RCA Victor Album Y-374. *Billy-on-a-Bike.* Told by Vaughn Monroe, with Ray Carter and his orchestra. RCA Victor Album Y-366. *Happy the Humbug Has a Birthday.* Music by George Kleinsinger. Narrated by David Wayne, with orchestra conducted by Henri René. RCA Victor Album Y-370.—All these discs are unbreakable. They represent fine skill in the art of devising recorded entertainment for children.

OLEY SPEAKS. *On the Road to Mandalay.* WILFRED SANDERSON. *Until.* Leonard Warren, baritone, with Willard Sektberg at the piano.—This disc will undoubtedly add to the popularity of Mr. Warren. RCA Victor disc 10-1447.

JOHANNES BRAHMS. *Sonata No. 3, in D Minor, for Violin and Piano, Op. 108.* Mischa Elman, violinist, with Wolfgang Rose at the piano. —Mr. Elman, who used to be inclined to tear passion to tatters, imbues his reading of this great composition with restraint and refinement. RCA Victor Album 1232.

# The Literary Scene

READ NOT TO CONTRADICT AND CONFUTE—NOR TO BELIEVE AND TAKE FOR GRANTED—BUT TO WEIGH AND CONSIDER

*All unsigned reviews are by members of the Staff*

## New England Verse

*AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE NEW ENGLAND POETS.* Edited by Louis Untermeyer. Random House, New York. 1948. 636 pages.

IT WOULD be difficult to improve on the publisher's choice of an editor for this volume. Mr. Louis Untermeyer, a poet in his own right, shows the excellence of his poetical taste in the selections he brings from the New England poets covering everything from the Colonial Period down to our own, from Anne Bradstreet down to Robert Lowell. There are thirty-three writers in all and more than 300 of their poems are given.

It is a delight to page through the volume and to read at random. Here the known is intermingled with the less known. There are lyricists, moralists, revolutionists, mystics, impressionists, transcendentalists, skeptics, etc., representing the thought and mood and eloquence of their day. Emerson is represented with forty poems, Longfellow with thirty-seven, Emily Dickinson with twenty-five, Edwin Arlington Robinson with fifteen, Robert Frost with twenty-one, Henry David Thoreau with thirteen, etc.

A very readable biographical sketch of each poet introduces his selections, together with a critical commentary on his writings, reflecting both good judgment and charity on the part of the editor of the volume.

## Christmas Gift

*THE MARTIN LUTHER CHRISTMAS BOOK.* Translated and arranged by Roland H. Bainton. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia. 1948. 76 pages. $2.50.

A FAVORITE gift at Christmas time is a good book. Unfortunately, too many publishers and booksellers take advantage of this fact to foist second-rate books upon the public during the Christmas season in the hope of cashing in on the Christmas season.

That unfortunate fact made *The Martin Luther Christmas Book* all the more welcome to this reviewer. Anyone who must read and review many books during the year will

greet this publication with delight and enthusiasm. Here is a book which combines literary, artistic, and religious beauty, which entertains as it edifies.

Prof. Bainton of Yale, an outstanding Reformation authority, has selected passages from the Christmas preaching of Martin Luther which show the Reformer's profound understanding of the meaning of the birth of Christ. Some of these are humorous, some very profound, some delightfully simple. But all are animated by the faith and the wonderment with which Luther greeted the message of Christmas.

Accompanying the well-selected and well-printed prose are woodcuts on Christmas themes by Luther's contemporaries. There is perceptible in them the same earthy religiousness that shines through the sermons. Schongauer, Dürer, and Altdorfer show in the rugged lines of their woodcuts the abiding meaning of the story of the Child.

Such a book as this does not appear often. It has an appeal to all, regardless of age, education, or denominational affiliation. It will make an ideal Christmas gift, to be read and fondled for many years to come.

## Reflections on Psychoanalysis

*FREUD AND HIS TIME.* By Fritz Wittels. Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York. 451 pages. $2.95.

WE ARE puzzled about the publication date of this book. It is copyrighted in 1931 and seems to have been written at that time; yet it is listed by the book trade as of this year. We must leave the riddle unsolved.

The author, a practicing psychoanalyst, undertakes to tell about Freud himself and to outline his teachings. He seems, however, to have accepted not only his master's views, but also his manner, for he not only does very creditably what he has set out to do but a variety of things besides. There is first a rambling chapter on "Goethe and Freud," and in conclusion one on "Einstein and Freud" in which Einstein is merely mentioned a few times and then forgotten in favor of other topics. The body of the volume is devoted to Freud's teachings and to Wittels' reflections on them and on a number of other things that come to his mind.

Freud's theories are presented clearly and in their interrelation, both those for which the world is so much in his debt and those which are fantastic oddities. Then there is a chapter entitled "Anthropological Reflections," which is a rare specimen of what can happen to a man of good instincts when he gets a bellyful of intellectual locoweed. One is somewhat mollified on finding that Wittels, in a postscript at the end, calls the chapter "my prehistoric speculation" and a "fantasy," but one is again amazed to note that he nevertheless thinks he has made a contribution to knowledge through it. The book, like the whole work of Freud, is a mixture of extremely valuable insights and of extremely queer aberrations. Even so it is, however, well worth reading.

## Confederate Man-of-War

*DIXIE RAIDER, the Saga of the C. S. S. Shenandoah.* By Murray Morgan. Publishers: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., New York. 1948. 336 pages. $4.00.

MURRAY MORGAN is a relatively new writer. With a B.A. in journalism from the University of Washington, he went east, did some reporting, and entered the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, from which he later received the Pulitzer traveling scholarship. After doing his stint in the army during the late war, spending over a year in the Aleutians, he published his first book: *Bridge to Russia—The Amazing Aleutians.* It received good reviews. Before writing the *Dixie Raider,* he spent six months at research work, his wife assisting him, and found so much material that it was not necessary to do any fictionalizing. "Every conversation in the book is as recalled by the man who spoke or by someone who listened."

The story of *Dixie Raider* is the story of the Confederate ship, the *Shenandoah,* which was obtained with the assistance of the English and which preyed on United States shipping practically all over the Seven Seas, for it circumnavigated the globe. It literally destroyed the American whaling fleet in the Bering Sea in 1865. All this without ever even being sighted by one of the cruisers of the North. The ship, under Captain Waddell, continued its work of destruction even after the surrender of the Confederate forces.

The ultimate destiny of the *Shenandoah* was to serve as the yacht of the Sultan of Zanzibar and of its captain to serve on a police boat in Chesapeake Bay in search of oyster pirates.

The book is well illustrated with contemporary prints, portraits, cartoons, charts and maps.

## Behind the Iron Curtain

*AS WE SEE RUSSIA.* By members of the Overseas Press Club of America. Preface by Robert B. Considine. E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1948. 316 pages. $3.75.

IN THESE days of strained relations between the United States and the Soviet Union every citizen of our land should try to learn as much as possible about how the Russians live, what they think, how they are governed, and what objectives they are pursuing. *As We See Russia* contains a wealth of information concerning life and living in the largest country on earth. It is a book written by able and experienced reporters. They tell favorable as well as unfavorable things about the U.S.S.R. and its people.

The contributors are Henry Cassidy, Leland Stowe, Josef Israels II, Hal Lehrman, Reuben H. Markham, Emil Lengyel, Harold R. Isaacs, Paula LeCler, George Moorad, Bill Downs, Oriana Atkinson, Tracey Phillips, Leo Glassman, Sonia Tomara, Joseph B. Phillips, Ralph McGill, Edith W. Thompson, John Strohm, John F. Chapman, William Zukerman, Larry Lesueur, Henry C. Wolfe, Eugene Lyons, Richard C. Hottelet, and Craig Thompson.

Robert B. Considine says:

These men and women are a unique group. The composite impact of their words is a genuine contribution to free peoples whose governments' foreign policies appear often to waver and tack. Herein, the essentials about Russia and Russians are nailed down securely by able hands. This is a book whose sum of information—while arrived at by twenty-five different processes—is not beset by the din of grinding axes. . . .

The book deals with the aspirations of the Soviet Union in the momentous drama which is now being enacted on the stage of history, with the people themselves, with the Soviet system in its numerous ramifications, and with common misconceptions concerning the U.S.S.R.

## Food and Fancy

*EATING FOR HEALTH.* By Pearl Lewis, B.S. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1948. 121 pages. $2.25.

THE AUTHOR, a dietitian of many years of experience, offers this book as "a study of foods, the relation of food to the human body, and a plan of Eating for Health." Though she writes for the populace, such definitions as the following could conceivably have been omitted: "Beef is the muscle of steer, ox, and cow"; "pork is the muscle of hog." People who do not know these things probably cannot read either. A deep mystery hangs over the sheep family, for lamb is "muscle of sheep 3 to 12 weeks old," and mutton is "muscle of sheep 3 years old." The inquiring mind straightway muses, "And what in conscience is muscle of sheep at other times than those herein provided for? It is obviously not lamb, nor again is it mutton. What is it, then, that is consumed by the unsuspecting eater who ingests a helping or two of muscle of sheep on, say, the second anniversary of the sheep's birth or thereabouts?" We refrain from making any guesses. Surely, this is no matter for levity.

The statement, "Scientific studies of human beings have established proof that: the body is made up of the foods we eat; the body is constantly wearing out; the body must have food for energy," did not impress us as deeply as the announcement of the results of various other scientific studies. We had long suspected that something like that might be the case. Also, the revelation that "the seed of the grain is the most valuable part of the plant" left us unenthused. We had shrewdly inferred as much from watching the antics of farmers; but those who cling to false notions about the superior value of the straw had better take note. To say that "energy is heat" is peculiar physics. What about potential energy? "Heat is energy" is quite another matter. We pass by several offhand dogmatic excursions into the field of philosophy ("The individual is the expression of the human body"; "Life is a chemical function sustained by nutrition").

It is a pity that the book has not been properly edited, for there is some worth-while information in it, including dietary plans for various ages, data on the nutritive values of foods, and directions for cooking.

## Race Segregation

*HARLEM STORY.* By John Hewlett. Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York. 1948. 242 pages. $2.50.

FLUTIE is white, blonde and Negro. Coming to Harlem from Georgia she stumbles into a den of prostitutes rather like Oliver Twist running afoul of Fagin. In her bewilderment Flutie meets a white song writer in a subway station. Their romance flourishes in the Deep Fat Chicken Coop, a Harlem diner. By adopting such phrases as *non sequitur,* learned from a Negro pedant, Flutie passes as a Portuguese. Somewhere in the volume she seems to marry her white man. Suspense over the color of their unborn child is strung taut till the last page.

This loosely-hinged plot with its *deus ex machina* contrivances is but an excuse for Mr. Hewlett to write about Harlem. Harlem is so preposterous a community that it almost requires a novel about it to be totally fantastic, as *Harlem Story* indeed is.

Mr. Hewlett's prose vegetates into a profusion of descriptions. At his worst his sprawling sentences need weeding. At his best he shares the throbbing sensitivity of Thomas Wolfe for cityscapes. (We feel compelled to note the inordinate preoccupation of these two Southerners with the aroma and succulence of ham, black-eyed peas and other sub-Mason and Dixon Line victuals.) Because of its vitality *Harlem Story,* unlike other novels pleading a cause, never becomes a sugar-coated tract.

Novels like *Harlem Story* or *Strange Fruit,* which deal with the bizarre, erratic phases of our color problem, teem the market. We are still waiting for the book that will lay bare the little, persistent sorrows of segregation. ROBERTA IHDE

## The Negro in America

*BLACK ODYSSEY.* By Roi Ottley. Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.50.

THERE have, of course, been many studies on the Negro in America. This is the first account, as far as we are able to determine, presented in a popular manner, of the story of the Negro from early colonial times until today. This is not to deny scholarship to Mr. Ottley. Every page of the book bears evidence of careful research. It is interesting to note that in the 17th century Negroes were not regarded with the opprobrium heaped upon them today. At that time they were described as "African Gentlemen." Had those early Negroes come from a powerful civilized community capable of demanding the protection of international law it is doubtful if Americans would have proceeded in their policy of the enslavement of the Negro. Incidentally, the first legal slaveholder in America was a Negro, Anthony Johnson.

## Communist Intrigues

*THE STRUGGLE BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN.* By Ferenc Nagy. The MacMillan Company, 1948. 461 pages. $6.00.

ALL of the ingredients for a first-class mystery thriller are in this book by Hungary's last freely-selected

premier. There are the Communist villains, the heroic and honorable peasants, the intrigues and counter-intrigues in old Budapest, the midnight rendezvous, the sudden disappearances—indeed so much of the typical Middle European cloak-and-dagger mystery is here that one sometimes has to stop and remind himself that this is not just a good job of fiction but an actual, true account of what went on just a short while ago in an actual nation.

Much of what Nagy has to say will be familiar to anyone who has taken the trouble to study Communist methods. There, too, the reader needs to keep things in perspective. One goes along reading and silently criticizing Nagy and his fellows for allowing themselves to be taken in by Soviet promises, blandishments, and agreements but, of course, we forget that it was people like Nagy and Mihailovich and Mikolajczik who made the experiments in dealing with the Soviet from which we learned just in time that the Red Fascism is simply a Cyrillic edition of the old black and brown varieties.

One has the feeling as one reads Nagy's account of what happened in Hungary that there is still a part of the story, or at least another slant on the story, to be told. One could wish that Zoltan Tildy, Nagy's old co-worker in the Smallholders' Party and Hungary's first post-war president, might have the opportunity to tell the story as he sees it. Then there was Bela Kovacs, who seems to have been particularly close to Nagy, who might raise some questions as to the necessity for Nagy's giving in quite as much as he did. (Kovacs, you may remember, was kidnapped and carted off to parts unknown by the Russians. Nagy, although greatly incensed and undoubtedly deeply hurt by the incident, still persisted in trying to get along with the Russians.)

Of course, it is very easy (and safe) to sit in a comfortable office on a Midwestern college campus and pass judgment in a case such as this. It would be quite a bit more difficult to have to spend sixteen months in the job Nagy held, each day having to make decisions which had to be compounds of morality and expediency and which involved not only his own welfare but the welfare of a whole nation and beyond that the welfare of all Europe.

The author is now an expatriate, living on a farm in Virginia. Unlike many of the deposed leaders of Europe, Nagy was a peasant and had no private means. Since coming to America, he has returned to farming and is supporting himself and his family by actual manual labor.

## Their Finest Hour

*DUNKIRK.* By A. D. Divine, D.S.M. E. P. Dutton and Co., New York. 1948. 301 pages. $4.50.

PACKED into the 301 closely-printed pages of this volume is the story of one of the greatest moments in the history of a nation that has known many a great moment. And like so many of the finest hours of British history, Dunkirk was the reverse face of a tragedy.

The author, although he nowhere mentions the fact, played a gallant role in the evacuation of the British

army from the beaches and Dunkirk and his writing reflects his intimate knowledge of what went on. Beyond his own experiences, he has drawn voluminously (and, unfortunately, in places tediously) upon documentary and other sources. The result is what will perhaps be for some time the definitive study of this operation.

We will probably never know the full story of Dunkirk. Some of the German generals maintain that it lay within the power of their armies to destroy the entire British army which was evacuated from the beach there. They say that they were stopped by Hitler who, following another of his by now notorious hunches, figured on working out some sort of negotiated peace with the British. However that may be, the elements of gallantry and daring that were displayed in the mere physical task of getting more than a third of a million men off an indefensible beach and across open sea to the security of their own island are not likely to be forgotten for centuries to come.

The great fault of the book, unfortunately, is its very completeness. Presumably Mr. Divine was not writing for the general reading public but for those who are especially interested in this particular operation or in military and naval history.

In England, of course, the book will have quite a different reading public, for the whole story of Dunkirk was the story of ordinary everyday Englishmen performing extraordinary feats to accomplish a nearly impossible objective. In many an English coastal village, this book will be read by sailors and fishermen and a great many other common folk, some of whom Divine mentions and some of whom were decorated by their King. To them, even the documents will be interesting because they deal with fellow-townsmen or acquaintances from up the coast.

## Realistic Saga

*STALINGRAD.* By Theodor Plievier. Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1948. 357 pages. $3.00.

THIS book, translated from the German, takes its place by the side of Remarque's *All's Quiet on the Western Front;* but while the latter covered almost the whole length of the First World War, *Stalingrad* deals only with the period from November 18, 1942, the day before the Russian offensive broke through the German lines in the great bend of the Don, to about February 2, 1943, when all Stalingrad was again in Russian hands. It is the story of the operations which proved the turning-point of the war: the encirclement of the German Sixth Army, the gradual compression of the pocket, the ineffectual efforts at relief and supply, the progressive demoralization of the trapped forces, and the final surrender. It is a tale of the brutality of war, of stark horrors, of the inhuman sufferings of starving men without shelter in the bitter cold, and with it an indictment of those who brought such things to pass. This is no book for children or for those who cannot keep their imagination in check, for through its dramatic power it would indelibly etch in their minds scenes of horror that far surpass anything in

Dante's *Inferno*. For others, however, it may be a salutary revelation of the unspeakable sufferings and the almost inconceivable human degradation that is attendant on war.

Biographical notes regarding Plievier on the cover state that he went into exile with the advent of Hitler's regime. We are not told where he went. We are, however, informed that he collected his material from his own observations at the front and from the narratives of German prisoners and that, after the war, he returned to the Russian zone in Germany. Obviously, he must have gone to Russia and have stayed there during the war. There are just a few passages that speak of the treatment accorded captured Germans by the Russians, but these let the Russians appear in an almost angelic light—very differently from what they are in the slave camps and in the occupied countries since the end of the war. We can only set this down as subtle propaganda, and that again makes us wonder how reliable in detail the rest of the story is.

## Pacific Problems

*ANATOMY OF PARADISE.* By J. C. Furnas. William Sloane Associates, Inc., New York. 489 pages, bibliography, index.

THIS is the latest of several volumes having to do with the Pacific area and published with the cooperation of the American Institute of Pacific Affairs. Those who are acquainted with the work of this group know that their sponsorship is a warranty of honest, objective scholarship and this volume, while perhaps somewhat less objective than some of its predecessors, comes up to expectations.

Thanks to the cinema, the Pacific area has become pretty much of a myth to most of us, an area as unreal as the polar regions of the planet Venus. Perhaps the movies are not entirely at fault. Long before their day, writers both in the United States and Europe were obsessed with the idea of the "noble savage," an idea once associated with the American Indian and subsequently switched to the South Sea Islander. Legends have grown up around the islander, legends that have made it nearly impossible for us to accept him as a human being with qualities both good and bad, with traditions different from ours but perhaps no less valid. As a result, the great powers who in the course of the centuries have held political control over the "natives" have not quite known how to deal with him. All of this Furnas brings out with considerable force.

The book is concerned primarily with Polynesia, but most of what is said would apply generally to all of the islands of the Pacific. He takes his readers through the history of the major Polynesian groups, showing how the white man's interests in the islanders have changed from time to time but how through it all the effect of the white man upon the islander has been to uproot a way of life and to offer no very satisfactory substitute in return. In the process of developing these points, Furnas needs to do a considerable amount of debunking and it is just possible that he carries

the debunking a little too far—so far that he overlooks the fact that most evils bring with them at least a few blessings.

The most unfortunate thing about Furnas' discussion of the Pacific is that there is throughout it all an essentially unreligious philosophy. This is not to suggest that every author need be a moralist but when, as in a discussion of the missionaries in the Pacific, the whole viewpoint is colored by one's attitude toward religion as such, it is next to impossible to satisfy every reader. This reviewer was not satisfied simply because he is not sure that Furnas is equipped to discuss the total impact of Christianity upon a pagan culture.

For the student of Pacific affairs, the bibliography at the end of the book may well prove the most valuable part of the whole volume. It is nicely gotten up and covers the widest possible range of interest.

## Anti-Roosevelt Polemic

*THE ROOSEVELT MYTH.* By John T. Flynn. The Devin-Adair Company, New York. 1948. 438 pages. $3.50.

MANY books have been written in glorification of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He has been held up to admiration as a great humanitarian, a profound scholar, a man of deep moral earnestness, a master mind in the fields of government and foreign relations—in short, as an exemplar of the ideal public servant. John T. Flynn, well-known columnist and author of several books and numerous articles, holds that the Roosevelt to whom those excellences are ascribed is a purely mythical being. He undertakes to picture the man as he actually was, "in his normal dimensions, reduced in size to agree with reality."

The Roosevelt who emerges from Flynn's critical analysis is not in any sense a heroic figure. He is a man who, after his election, evades the pleas of Hoover to help him take steps to avert the panic of 1933 for the reason that he wants economic chaos, at whatever cost to others, so that he may appear on the stage as the savior of the nation. This conscienceless attitude is characteristic of the rest of his life. The only principle which he consistently follows is that of political expediency. Since he has no well-grounded convictions of his own, he is ready to change policies and improvise new ones whenever a persuasive crackpot gains his ear. He delights in breaking precedents, including those of public morality and common decency. His is the distinction of being the first president who has prostituted his high office to enrich the members of his family. He has no regard for truth and no loyalty toward even his most loyal supporters; "he broke every promise; he betrayed all who trusted in him."

Such, according to Flynn, was the true Roosevelt—and there is much more to fill in the picture. To support the statements made references are given to a wide range of source material. It will seem to some that the colors used in painting the portrait are too dark, but when incontrovertible characteristics of Roose-

velt, such as his mendacity, his double-dealing, his conceit, and his fatuousness are taken into consideration, the rest of the picture falls harmoniously into line.

Flynn writes in a lucid, flowing style. He reaches the heights of caustic wit when he describes the strange menagerie that was brought together in Washington, consisting of Wallace, Milo Perkins, and others of that ilk. Wallace was "as odd a bird as had ever perched upon a cabinet post." "He likes to tackle something big—like the world, for instance. It is, after all, one of the smaller planets, yet it was big enough to start with."

## Boon to Music Lovers

*A DICTIONARY OF MUSICAL THEMES.* Compiled by Harold Barlow and Sam Morgenstern. Introduction by John Erskine. Crown Publishers, New York, 1948. 656 pages. $5.00.

HAROLD BARLOW and Sam Morgenstern have compiled a new kind of music dictionary—a dictionary as valuable as it is novel. It is a dictionary of themes—10,000 themes.

A melody flits through your mind. "What is it?" you ask. The tune returns. "I know that melody," you say, "but I can't identify it." The tune keeps coming back. It plagues you. You rack your brain. You suffer agony. You tear your hair, for you know that there will be no peace in your cranium until the tune has been identified.

If you have a copy of *A Dictionary of Musical Themes* at hand, you will soon find a way to set your harried brainpan at rest. There are no less than 10,000 chances that you will be able to do so.

For those who can read music as they read words the work compiled by Messrs. Barlow and Morgenstern is a wonderful picture book—a picture book which will teach them numerous new melodies and, at the same time, renew their acquaintance with many old friends in the vast world of tunes.

What about those who have not acquired the ability to read music as they read words? Does the book leave them in the lurch? No. Is it altogether useless to those who have not learned to play an instrument? It is not.

Let us suppose that a theme has begun to plague you. Maybe it's from Beethoven's *Eroica.* Maybe it's a melodic snatch from Gershwin's *An American in Paris.* Maybe it's a bit of Dvorak's *Symphony from the New World.* You don't know. You're puzzled. The tune keeps clamoring to be identified. "Where does it occur?" you ask. "Who wrote it?"

Soon you will have surcease. Go to your piano and pick out the melody in the key of C—on the white keys. Then turn to the cleverly designed notation index contained in the book, and, almost in a twinkling, you will have your answers.

*A Dictionary of Musical Themes* is a boon to everyone interested in music. It is a volume for the most erudite musicologist as well as for the music lover who has no technical training whatever but is eager to put a label on that tune which pops up in his memory and literally screams for identification.

There are, of course, many other

practical uses to which the dictionary can be put. Those who know the work ask almost involuntarily, "Why didn't someone think of this before?"

## Inside Stuff

*EISENHOWER WAS MY BOSS.* By Kay Summersby. Edited by Michael Kearns. Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York. 1948. 291 pages. Illustrated. $2.75.

KAY SUMMERSBY was born in County Cork, Ireland. She spent her childhood and her early adult years at Inesh Beg, the Summersbys' island home. In 1939 she went to London, where she played minor roles in British films. At the outbreak of World War II she enlisted in the Motor Transport Corps, and during the harrowing months of the great blitz she drove a rescue-squad ambulance in the hard-hit Lambeth area.

When the blitz ended, Miss Summersby was transferred to U. S. Army Headquarters in London. In May, 1942, she was assigned to serve as chauffeur for Major General Dwight D. Eisenhower during the general's first visit to the London Army Headquarters. When she read her assignment, she was disappointed. She knew that several Very Important Persons were to visit London, and she had hoped to get Top Brass, preferably General George C. Marshall or General "Hap" Arnold. It would be a feather in any driver's cap to be chosen to chauffeur these well-known Americans. The name Eisenhower meant nothing to Miss Summersby or to the other M.T.C. drivers. For ten days she dutifully—and expertly—drove General Eisenhower through bomb-scarred London. Her last task was to drive the general and his good friend General Mark Clark to the airport, where they were to board a homeward-bound plane. "They're both nice," she thought, "but I'll never see them again."

Miss Summersby was wrong. Two months later Dwight D. Eisenhower returned to London. This time he was indeed Top Brass, for he had just been appointed Supreme Commander of the European Theater of Operations. At his direct request Miss Summersby was again assigned to his staff. She remained on the general's staff for three and a half years. She accompanied him during the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, she served with him in Europe after the invasion of the continent, and she witnessed the sullen surrender of Hitler's haughty field marshalls and admirals in Berlin.

By special arrangement with the British government Miss Summersby was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U. S. Women's Army Corps while she still retained her British citizenship. She had attained the rank of captain at the time of her discharge from the W.A.C. She is now in the process of becoming an American citizen.

*Eisenhower Was My Boss* is Miss Summersby's candid personal record of momentous years and history-making events, but this light and frothy behind-the-scenes glimpse into the lives of the great military leaders makes no valuable or important contributions to the over-all picture of World War II. The writing is undistinguished.

## Uneven Workmanship

*SERAPH ON THE SUWANEE.* By Zora Neale Hurston. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 1948. 311 pages. $3.00.

ZORA NEALE HURSTON was born in Eatonville, Florida, the first incorporated Negro town in the United States. Her father, a carpenter and a successful Baptist preacher, served three terms as mayor of Eatonville; her mother was a country schoolteacher before her marriage at the age of sixteen.

Miss Hurston, the seventh of a family of eight children, learned to read before she reached school age. By the time she was eight, she had become an omniverous reader. She read everything and anything she could lay her hands on. Her father "considered novels to be works of the Devil" and sternly forbade his children to stoop to such meretricious reading. In spite of his edict Zora read, without discrimination, fairy tales, blood-and-thunder dime novels, advertisements, the Bible, and her sisters' and brothers' schoolbooks.

During her high-school days Miss Hurston decided to become a geologist. She served as student assistant to her geology professor at Howard University, continued taking courses in biology at Barnard, and then enrolled in the Columbia College of Engineering. Here an instructor convinced her that geology was an unrewarding field for a woman. In consequence, Miss Hurston decided to use her $175-a-month Columbia University fellowship to pursue the study of folk lore.

Miss Hurston's first published story brought requests from four publishers for a full-length work. Her first novel, *Seraph on the Suwanee,* was accepted after only a brief consideration. When she received the telegram informing her that her manuscript had been accepted, Miss Hurston had just been evicted because she could not meet an eighteen-dollar rent payment.

Although *Seraph on the Suwanee* is a promising first novel, the workmanship is curiously uneven. The background material is excellent and reveals an intimate and authoritative knowledge of the locale portrayed. The characterizations are less vivid and drawn with far less skill.

## Healing of the Mind

*PSYCHIATRY AND RELIGION.* By Joshua Loth Liebman. The Beacon Press, Boston. 1948. 202 pages. $3.00.

ABOUT a year ago an Institute on Religion and Psychiatry was held at a synagogue in Boston. It was attended by Christian and Jewish clergymen and by psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. The purpose of the conference was to make clear how religion and psychiatry can assist each other and to encourage co-operation between them. Fifteen members of the group contributed papers and discussions to the symposium, which is reported in this volume. There are three papers on the relations between religion and psychiatry and two on hospital care of the mentally ill, but most of the book deals with the problems of childhood, adolescence,

and marriage. Albert Deutsch contributes a paper which tells of almost incredible conditions in mental hospitals in our country, even in such states as New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio—conditions which he compares to those of the Nazi concentration camp at Belsen.

As is always the case in symposia, the contributions represent a variety of viewpoints and vary considerably in interest and value. There is, for instance, a Dr. Johnson, professor of the Psychology of Religion at Boston University, who speaks of sin as "a human invention" and considers religious ethics "a man-made system." Prof. Magoun of M.I.T. says, " 'What God hath joined' expresses an unwarranted assumption which would surely be characterized as such by omniscient wisdom." The unwarranted assumption is, of course, furnished by Prof. Magoun, who has the notion that these words mean that at each marriage God has predestined that particular man for that particular woman and now guarantees them happiness. If he will read Matthew 10 he will learn that the words in question refer to marriage and the marriage bond as such.

These two aberrations are fortunately not typical of the whole. On the contrary, many sound observations and valuable insights are to be found in the book. We especially noted that several psychiatrists took a strong stand against the wide-spread notion that children should not be punished but be given their head for fear of developing frustrations in them.

Psychiatry and religion should certainly work hand in hand, as two branches of the healing art. Religion is for the healing of souls, medicine for the healing of bodies, and psychiatry for the healing of minds. An acquaintance with the symptoms of mental disease and with psychiatric methods is of great value to pastors and other church workers—not so that they may try to act as amateur psychiatrists but that they may be able to judge when a psychiatrist is needed and advise accordingly.

## Indian Widow

*THE STORY OF INDURAJA.* By Hilda Wernher. Doubleday and Company, Garden City, New York. 1948. 251 pages. $2.75.

THE STORY OF INDURAJA is the story of a Hindu princess who marries into a noble Indian family suspicious of her western education. Widowed at 23, she suffers under the haircloth decorum of widowhood scarcely less fierce than a century ago when wives mounted their husbands' funeral pyre. Induraja pushes aside tradition to found an orphanage, school and clinic. The novel is current enough to incorporate incidents arising when Pakistan is carved from Mother India.

Miss Wernher's approach is reminiscent of *The Outdoor Girls* series, possibly because the plot is simple and the writing unpretentious. And yet maturity pervades the book. The friction between Hindu and Moslem reflects America's color problem. Recalling the boisterous novels about our parallel disorder, we respect the quiet, non-compromising treatment

she gives the Indian situation. She follows in the steps of E. M. Forster with his *A Passage to India.*

One expects many lesser books for every great one published, but one seldom finds them concocted of more than a frothy substance. *The Story of Induraja* is a lesser book, but it is worthy of both the printing and the reading. ROBERTA IHDE

## Man vs. Not-Man

*THE DOUBLE AXE AND OTHER POEMS.* By Robinson Jeffers. Random House, New York. 1948. 149 pages. $2.75.

IN HIS Preface the author explains his concern with a philosophical attitude "which might be called Inhumanism, a shifting of emphasis and significance from man to not-man; the rejection of human solipsism and recognition of the transhuman magnificence. It seems time that our race began to think as an adult does, rather than like an egocentric baby or insane person. This manner of thought . . . offers a reasonable detachment as a rule of conduct, instead of love, hate and envy."

In the two long poems that compose most of the book Jeffers presents a contrast between these two modes of thought. Both poems are crammed with horrors, resulting from love, hate, and envy, and in both a detached character—in the first a dead soldier of World War II and in the second an old man—serve as raisonneurs, judging the actions. The soldier, furthermore, sets forth Jeffers' opinion that America should have stayed out of both world wars.

The distinction of the style sets this work apart from the run of controversial poems. Jeffers is able to combine barracks slang with philosophical terms and traditional literary language. The free verse rhythms are strong and well able to carry the violence of the thought and action.

# The READING ROOM

By THOMAS COATES

## They Predicted Truman's Victory

AS THESE lines are written, we have just picked ourselves up off the floor, having slumped onto same about midnight (Pacific Standard Time) of November 2. As we look back upon the election debacle, we have only one consolation, viz., that we resisted a certain mad impulse that seized us about mid-October to write this column at that time on the subject of Dewey's victory—in the *past* tense. Whether it was a strange sixth sense that stayed our hand from the rash deed, or whether—probably closer to the truth—we simply put off writing this column till we heard the editor utter his usual scream about the "deadline," we derive at least some crumbs of comfort from the fact that we were spared the extra work—not to mention the humiliation—of rewriting this column.

It is humiliating enough, in all conscience, to look back at the notes we had made in preparation for this month's work. Proceeding with what we fancied to be a superb sense of timing, we had selected a symposium of notable articles in the contemporary journals on the subject of the next President and the resurgence of the G.O.P. We had read, with a glow of satisfaction, such thought-provoking articles as "The Republican Revival," by Oren Root in the September *Atlantic;* "President (sic) Dewey's Strange Bedfellows," in the September *Harper's;* and "The Men Around Dewey" in the October issue of the same magazine. What greater service could we render this column's avid readers (we trust that the use of the plural does not show undue conceit) than to bring them a digest of the very latest and most authoritative comment on the new Republican administration!

But now it is goodbye to all that. Instead, poking through the shambles of the discredited pollsters, analysts, and political experts, we unearthed two amazingly prescient articles among the recent journals which—believe it or not—predicted, or at least conceded the possibility of, President

Truman's re-election. It seems to us, therefore, that very large bouquets should be presented to Robert Bendiner for insisting, "Don't Count Truman Out," in the September 11 issue of *The Nation,* and to ex-Governor Ellis Arnall of Georgia for his article in the October *Atlantic,* "The Democrats Can Win."

Mr. Bendiner's article is an interesting review of the recent book by the noted political analyst, Louis H. Bean, entitled *How to Predict Elections.* Working on the basis of Mr. Bean's assumptions, Mr. Bendiner argued, "Even a rank amateur can see at a glance that most of the factors he cites are not operating this year in favor of the Grand Old Party."

What are these factors? For one thing: "High food prices . . . do not make for that unrest among farmers that prompts them to call for a change." For confirmation of this assumption, so universally disregarded by pre-election analysts, we need only to look at the results in such states as Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Ohio, where the normally Republican majorities in the rural areas failed to materialize.

Under ordinary circumstances, of course, the same high food prices that helped Truman in the farm belt would have been disastrous to him in the industrial centers. But this time the blame for the high cost of living could be placed on the Republican Congress, thereby nullifying G.O.P. advantage among the urban voters. This is exactly what happened, as Mr. Bendiner forecast two months before the election.

Perhaps the most interesting facet of Louis Bean's theory of elections is his theory that the Republican tide set in, not two years ago—as most people believed—but twelve years ago, and that it has already run out. This theory receives some support in the Democratic successes in the by-elections of 1947—when the Republican tide began to ebb. While the validity of this theory is open to some question, the fact remains that the Democrats won the 1948 election. And Mr. Bendiner, for one—almost the only one—called the turn last September.

In this, however, he was not quite alone. Another who possessed the rare gift of political divination was ex-Governor Ellis Arnall of Georgia. "The Democrats Can Win," was the insistent title of his article in the October *Atlantic*—and what a fantastic sound it carried at the time! Mr. Arnall's approach was somewhat different, though no less realistic, than the Bean-Bendiner theory. His argument ran thus:

> The opinion that the United States will embrace conservatism for a long period, beginning with the election

of 1948, requires the rejection of almost all the facts available and the adoption of an illogic that is stupendous. Since V-J Day, in no country except the Union of South Africa has a conservative party won at the polls in a free election. . . . Wherever free elections were held on the Continent, without the intervention of either Russian or Western force, the victory went either to the centrist or mildly leftist parties.

The durability of the Democratic Party, according to Mr. Arnall, lies in the two-fold fact that it is more truly national than the Republican Party (at one time or another the Democrats have carried every American state), and that it has at all times been a coalition. It is this merging of the interests of the various groups that has lent strength to the party—as was evidenced again this November 2.

Of this coalition, Mr. Arnall predicted that Labor would string along with Mr. Truman, however reluctantly, simply because he offered the only hope of Taft-Hartley repeal. The second member of the coalition, the "intellectual left," would certainly not vote Republican, neither could they swallow Henry Wallace and his unsavory associates; the Democratic Party remained their only alternative.

As for the third member of the coalition, the South, Governor Arnall prophesied—with uncanny accuracy—that the Southerners would either remain in, or return to, the Democratic fold. For this there are three reasons: Habit, selfishness, and cowardice. (As we write these lines, the report comes through that at least some of the Dixiecrat electors will cast their votes for President Truman in the electoral college!)

Concerning Harry Truman, Mr. Arnall writes:

> Suddenly the realization arrives that this man is very typical of America, and that the criticism of him is the self-criticism of Americans, and that on election day they are very likely to vote for one of themselves.

Well, they did just what Georgia's ex-governor thought they would. Now, why didn't somebody else think of that?

Speaking about politics, the November issue of *Harper's* carries an illuminating article on "Unwritten Rules of American Politics," by John Fischer. Mr. Fischer places much stock in John C. Calhoun's principles of the concurrent majority and of sectional compromise as being basic to the operation of the American political system. In fact, it is just these principles that give American politics its peculiar genius. American politics operates according to blocs, and the successful party is the one which can muster the support of the largest number of special interest groups.

The author demonstrates that "the American tendency to push extremists of both the left and the right toward a middle position has enabled us, so far, to escape class warfare." This constitutes a fundamental difference between American political parties and those of Europe.

We liked the conclusion of the article, and especially the final quotation:

> The uncompromising ideologist, of whatever faith, appears in our eyes peculiarly "un-American," simply because he cannot recognize the rule of the concurrent majority, nor can he accept the rules of mutual tolera tion which are necessary to make it work. Unless he forsakes his ideology, he cannot even understand that basic principle of American politics which was perhaps best expressed by Judge Learned Hand: "The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right."

That, in the emotional flush of these post-election days, is something to remember.

A BRIEF GLANCE AT  RECENT PUBLICATIONS

# A SURVEY OF BOOKS

## EUROPE

*A PERSONAL POLITICAL SURVEY OF 3,000 YEARS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY.* By C. A. Alington. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 1948. 388 pages. $3.75.

THE air in our country is filled with discussions about Europe, the Europeans, and the role which Europe has played, is playing, and will play in the history of the world. Unfortunately, too many of these discussions are based on scanty knowledge. *Europe,* by C. A. Alington, Dean of Durham and former Headmaster of Eton, gives a bird's-eye view of the European continent, its inhabitants, and its history during the past thirty centuries. He has crammed a huge amount of learning into less than 400 pages. Besides, he writes with an exceedingly agile pen. He says in the preface:

I shall be more than content if a book, written primarily for my own amusement, helps a few readers to see more clearly how Europe came into its present shape, introduces them to a few forgotten heroes, and, above all, reminds them that past history is not only "present politics," but also one of the most fascinating of studies even for the amateur.

## PILGRIM'S INN

By Elizabeth Goudge. Coward-McCann, Inc., New York. 1948. 346 pages. $3.00.

ELIZABETH GOUDGE frankly admits that she deliberately contrives a happy ending for her novels. She says:

I know that happy endings are sometimes inartistic, and certainly not always true to life, but I can't write any other kind. I am not a serious chronicler of the very terrible contemporary scene, but just a story-teller, and there is so much tragedy about us everywhere today that we surely don't want it in the story books to which we turn when we are ill or unhappy, or can't go to sleep at night. We must escape somewhere. I had some happy hours of escape when I was writing this book, and I hope very much that perhaps a few readers may have them when they read it.

Miss Goudge's modest hope has been realized in a spectacular man-

ner. *Pilgrim's Inn* has been on best-seller lists all over the country for many weeks and has been earmarked for a lavish motion-picture production.

Other works from the pen of this popular English novelist are *The Bird in the Tree* and the phenomenally successful *Green Dolphin Street.*

## TOWARD THE MORNING

By Hervey Allen. Rinehart & Company, New York. 1948. 458 pages. $3.00.

THE third volume in Hervey Allen's exhaustive study of Colonial Pennsylvania carries forward the story begun in *The Forest and Fort* and continued in *Bedford Village. Toward the Morning* has many excellent qualities. Painstaking research, careful attention to historical detail, a fine sense of drama, and occasional flashes of brilliant writing set it apart from the hackneyed and unreliable historical novels which have appeared in recent years. Unfortunately, Mr. Allen is longwinded. *Toward the Morning* moves along at a snail's pace.

## MASTERWORKS OF HISTORY

*DIGEST OF ELEVEN GREAT CLASSICS.* Edited by Joseph Reither. Doubleday and Company, Inc., Garden City, N. Y. 1948. 693 pages. $5.00.

ONE of the worthwhile projects in the publishing business in the last decade has been the presentation to our generation of new editions and also new translations of the great classics in the fields of literature, philosophy, science, and also history. This is one of these efforts and the publisher is to be commended for it. Here we have in one volume a digest of such classics as Herodotus' *History,* Tacitus' *Annals,* Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation;* Macaulay's *History of England,* Bancroft's *History of the United States,* and a half dozen others, just as important to the student of history. The book is heartily recommended to our readers.

## THE TOWN WITH THE FUNNY NAME

By Max Miller. E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., N. Y. 1948. 224 pages. $2.75.

FOLLOWERS of Mr. Miller, "coverer of The Waterfront," will undoubtedly find that *The Town with the Funny Name* has "all the charm and simplicity, which is Max Miller's greatest talent." It seems to be Mr. Miller's only talent, for there on The Edge (of the Pacific) in the little town of La Jolla, California (pronounced "La Hoya"), he reflects simply on everything. Everything from eels to the international situation to the hereafter gets a few words; Mr. Miller does best on the eels.

All-year-round tourists and disrupters of Pacific-edge-peace give Mr. Miller occasion to think and write as a native anywhere would. But as for general universal appeal, *The Town* seems to be a gathering of too personal musings, some humorous, a few worthwhile, most hardly worth printing. However, if the reader likes Max Miller's style, he should read

*The Town* rather than the encyclopedia—discovering the habitats of the abalone and lobster is less painful that way.

—Anne Pelikan Lange

## FAMILY CIRCLE

By Cornelia Otis Skinner. Illustrated with photographs. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 1948. 310 pages. $3.50.

Cornelia Otis Skinner has scored again. Her new book has been on best-seller charts all over the country ever since it appeared early in September.

*Family Circle* is an intimate and delightfully informal record of a glittering chapter in the history of the theater. Miss Skinner is exceptionally well qualified to write an authoritative account of the fabulous era in which Ada Rehan, Augustin Daly, Helena Modjeska, John Drew, and other great figures of the past brought fame and glory to the American stage. Her parents were a part of that memorable period. Maud Durbin Skinner had made a name for herself before she retired from the stage at the time of Cornelia's birth. Otis Skinner achieved spectacular success in the tranquil years preceding the outbreak of World War I, and his name flashed from theater marquees for many years thereafter. In addition, the popular star wrote three valuable and widely read volumes of memoirs and theatrical lore. Miss Skinner tells us that much of the material used in *Family Circle* was gleaned from her father's books and letters.

The Skinners were a devoted and closely knit trio. *Family Circle* is a nostalgic re-creation of a happy childhood as well as a warm and tender tribute to the author's parents.

## HANDEL

By Edward J. Dent. A. A. Wyn, Inc., New York. 1948. 140 pages. $1.50.

Those who have been looking for a brief biography of George Frideric Handel, the composer of *Messiah,* will welcome the little book from the pen of Edward J. Dent. It is one of a series of eleven small volumes dealing with great composers. Each book contains a chronological table of the important events in the master's professional life and lists his outstanding compositions. Four volumes in the *Great Musicians Series* are now ready: *Brahms,* by Ralph Hill; *Beethoven,* by Alan Pryce-Jones; *Wagner,* by W. J. Turner, and Mr. Dent's *Handel.* Short biographies of Bach, Mozart, Chopin, Tchaikovsky, Liszt, Debussy, and Rimsky-Korsakoff are in preparation.

## CATALINA

By W. Somerset Maugham. Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York. 1948. 275 pages. $3.00.

The twenty-second published novel by W. Somerset Maugham must be classified as a potboiler. But there are potboilers and potboilers, and a potboiler from Mr. Maugham's facile pen has a zest and a flavor utterly lacking in the works of less gifted writers.

*Catalina* is a simple and engaging tale from the dark age in which the Spanish Inquisition cast an oppressive shadow over rich and poor, highborn and lowly. In spite of false notes and obvious shortcomings this cleverly contrived story of the miracle which restored the crippled girl Catalina to health and happiness bears the unmistakable hallmark of expert and highly imaginative craftsmanship.

## THE WINE OF ASTONISHMENT

By Martha Gellhorn. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 1948. 325 pages. $3.00.

A BAD novelist but a crack reporter, Miss Gellhorn turns out a rather flimsy love story. Her account of life behind the front lines in Germany during the last war is a notch above the average newspaper story. *The Wine of Astonishment* tells how men and women act while facing death and enduring life without bathtubs, central heating or their spouses.

The activities of the book would put the WCTU in a dither. Miss Gellhorn smashes every Dresden figurine in the Victorian parlor. The book wants very badly a comment on the muddled morals but the author refrains from anything so Dickensian.

*The Wine of Astonishment* attempts to do for World War II what Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* did for World War I: to peel away the glamor. Yet in their struggle for realism their heroes assume Byronic poses. Much better war stories have been turned out by Stephen Crane, Leo Tolstoy and recently by John Hersey in *Hiroshima*. They have dipped into the unending sadness of war without getting faddish.

## RAVENSWOOD

By Mary Frances Doner. Doubleday and Company, New York. 1948. 254 pages. $2.75.

WHEN a novel is prefaced by a family tree it is usually a warning that the author has the instincts of an amateur fisherman collecting vast caches of reels to still his suspicions about his angling abilities. *Ravenswood's* family tree is spidery with four generations of begats.

The plot weaves through the history of the St. George family, which settled in the river area of lower Michigan and made its money refining salt. After rascalish uncles, unfortunate marriages and mistaken identities are disposed of everything winds up on a hopeful note.

*Ravenswood* has the aura of pressed roses in a volume of verse by Edgar Guest. It may blend unobtrusively into an afternoon of book reviews by a lady with a chiffon handkerchief before the local ladies aid.

## JOHN GOFFE'S MILL

By George Woodbury. W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York. 1948. 245 pages. $3.00.

JOHN GOFFE'S MILL is a fascinating book—the success story of an archeologist turned sawyer. Fortunately for the reader (and for himself), Mr. Woodbury has a delightful sense of humor.

In 1744, a John Goffe secured title

to a certain piece of land in Massachusetts on which he established a country saw and gristmill. About 1938, a descendant of Goffe, George Woodbury, urged by a hurricane and a small bank balance, decided to re-establish the old mill. With the help of local talent, his own brawn and brain, and advice from ancient inhabitants and ancient books, the sawmill was put back in working order. The business grew to unexpected proportions, and now, Mr. Woodbury cuts a tree from his own woods, takes it through the 200 year old mill, and brings it out as a finished piece of furniture.

To read the story of this enterprising family is a refreshing experience, and a nice way to spend an evening.

ANNA SPRINGSTEEN

## EARLY DAYS OF OIL

By Paul H. Giddens. The Princeton University Press. 1948. 150 pages. $6.00.

PAUL GIDDENS probably knows more about the history of the petroleum industry than any other man. As curator of the Drake Museum near Titusville, Pennsylvania, he has had access to the most important source material on the beginnings of the industry in Pennsylvania and it is from the Museum's collection of pictures that he has assembled this volume—primarily a picture album with good, brief explanatory notes by Giddens.

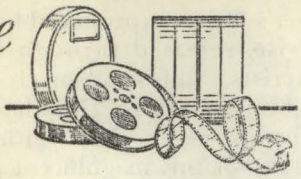
The photographer who took most of the pictures was a now all but forgotten John A. Mather who became interested in Titusville and the other oil towns around 1860 and spent a lifetime chronicling the industry and the society that grew up around it.

The price of the book, six dollars, makes it prohibitively expensive for the general reader but it should prove most interesting to anyone especially interested in the American scene between the War Between the States and the turn of the century or anyone who is interested in the evolution of photography.

## A TREASURY OF SEA STORIES

By Gordon C. Aymar. A. S. Barnes and Company, New York. 1948. 464 pages. $5.00.

THIS is a collection of thirty-one stories of the sea, drawn from many sources, both ancient and modern. Some are taken from books published within the last few years, others from such classics as Conrad's *The Nigger of the Narcissus* and Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast.* There is also the log kept by Columbus on his voyage of discovery. It is a pity that this book, which otherwise offers much that is of the highest quality, is disfigured by several stories containing vulgar and profane expressions.

# *The*  *Motion Picture*

THE CRESSET *evaluates one of the world's most powerful forces*

How much do you know about U.N.E.S.C.O.? Do you know what the letters U.N.E.S.C.O. stand for? It is surprising and a little disturbing to observe that many, many persons cannot properly identify U.N.E.S.C.O. and have only a vague understanding of the purpose for which this important body was organized.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in November, 1945. The lofty aims of U.N.E.S.C.O. are expressed in the slogan Peace Through Understanding and in this declaration made by U.N. three years ago:

> Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed. Ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of the suspicion and mistrust between the people of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war. For these reasons . . . believing in full and equal opportunities for education for all . . . and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, the States parties to this Constitution are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples . . . and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image.

The personnel of U.N.E.S.C.O. is made up of carefully selected representatives from many lands and from every field of endeavor. Their work has gone forward slowly and in the face of staggering difficulties. Comprehensive surveys have been made in seventeen countries. The results of these surveys were presented at the recent meeting of U.N.E.S.C.O.'s conference of technical experts in Paris and are to be published in book form.

Since the motion picture is a powerful medium for mass com-

munication and information, the Films Division has had an important part in the work of U.N.E.S.C.O. In spite of a meager budget and a lack of experienced workers in the audio-visual field, the Films Division has made substantial progress in many of the countries included in the survey, notably in Italy, Austria, Uruguay, the Far East, and the Dominican Republic. A new 22-point program, drawn up in the Paris meeting of U.N.E.S.C.O., underscores the use of films in the task of rebuilding war-wrecked and poverty-stricken nations. This program provides for the reciprocal exchange of audio-visual materials among member nations, the establishment of an international news service for audio-visual affairs, and the creation of a U.N.E.S.C.O. "showcase" of suitable films. It will arrange seminars for audio-visual educators, promote the use of 16-mm. mobile units, facilitate the work and travel of newsreel personnel, and protect these workers against arbitrary expulsion. It plans to request one feature-length children's film from each member nation, to establish a special fund through which audio-visual materials may be cleared, and to find ways and means for providing local-language versions of films and other audio-visual materials.

The most exciting event in the motion-picture world was the Boston *première* of Sir Laurence Olivier's *Hamlet* (produced by Enterprise, released through United Artists, and sponsored by the Theater Guild). Critics have been unanimous in their enthusiastic praise of this magnificent production. Unfortunately, general release of *Hamlet* will be held up for many months.

*An Apartment for Peggy* (20th Century-Fox, George Seaton) is a tender and appealing story of the ingenious way in which a G.I. student and his young wife solve their housing problems. This relatively low-cost film, launched without noise and ballyhoo, has more substance, warmth, and genuine humor than many of the current sophisticated super-colossal releases. Edmund Gwenn is superb in the role of the university professor who feels he has outlived his usefulness. Jeanne Crain and William Holden portray the harassed youngsters with charm and conviction. George Seaton's direction is excellent.

All the spice has gone out of M-G-M's screen version of Margery Sharp's popular novel *The Nutmeg Tree. Julia Misbehaves,* directed by Jack Conway, marks a change of pace from drama to comedy for Greer Garson. Miss Garson bounces about with hearty good will and gay abandon. It takes more than boisterous slap-

stick routines and wisecracking dialogue to make a good comedy.

*Rachel and the Stranger* (RKO-Radio), adapted from a novel by Howard Fast, takes us back to the early years of the nineteenth century. In spite of the fact that it is as "folksy" as all get out and drips corn and anachronisms from every pore, *Rachel and the Stranger* presents a simple and engaging picture of the loneliness and the difficulties of frontier life. The cast is exceptionally well chosen.

*Walls of Jericho* (20th Century-Fox, John Stahl) is an inflated, over-elaborate, and thoroughly unrewarding period piece.

*The Loves of Carmen* (Columbia, Charles Vidor) gives us a huge dose of Rita Hayworth, lavish sets in brightest technicolor, and a generous share of sequences given over to rough-and-tumble action. This may be enough for confirmed Hayworth fans. Reports from the box office seem to indicate that it is. Prosper Miremeé's story of the ill-fated gypsy girl seems weak and thin without the support of Georges Bizet's magnificent music.

A fine script, superb acting, and sensitive direction make *Johnny Belinda* (Warners, Jean Negulesco) an absorbing and unusually effective film drama. The entire cast merits warm commendation, but Jane Wyman's delicate pantomine and highly imaginative performance are especially noteworthy. This dark and tragic tale of violence and suffering is designed for adult audiences.

Apparently Red Skelton has been working overtime. *A Southern Yankee* (M-G-M) is made up of Red's well-worn and threadbare bag of tricks. There is a change of costume and locale—nothing more.

One can point to many excellent qualities in *Rope* (Warners, Alfred Hitchcock). The acting is good, the technicolor setting is novel and effective, and, under Alfred Hitchcock's skillful direction, the action builds to a dramatic climax. But *Rope* is a grisly and depressing film and a wholly unnecessary and undesirable reminder of a brutal and coldly calculated crime which shocked the nation back in the 1920's.

*Good Sam* (RKO-Radio, Leo McCarey) should have been a simple, homespun study of a good and kindly man. Unfortunately, it is not. It is merely another shallow, mawkish, and longwinded picture. Leo McCarey's deft touch seems to have deserted him this time.

*Race Street* (RKO-Radio, Edwin L. Main) and *Larceny* (Universal-International, George Sherman) have much in common.

Both films are melodramas built around a well-known plot, both contain an excessive amount of crime and violence, and both could just as well not have been made at all.

*Luxury Liner* (M-G-M, Richard Whorf) is another rehash of a familiar theme. This time Jane Powell is the ambitious girl singer who triumphs over heavy odds. Soprano Marina Koshetz and Tenor Lauritz Melchior deserve something better than this. I suppose though that heavy folding-money successfully cushions many a shock.

Rumor has it that Deanna Durbin is eager to sever connections with Universal-International. Can it be that the studio heads would try to stop her? *For the Love of Mary* (Universal-International, Frederick De Cordova), a stupid little farce if I ever saw one, eloquently points to the need for a change all around.

A resounding no is the only possible reply to *Isn't It Romantic* (Paramount, Norman L. McLeod). It isn't romantic. It isn't amusing. It isn't worth seeing.

The same verdict applies to *An Innocent Affair* (United Artists), *The Black Arrow* (Columbia), and *Embraceable You* (Warners).

New York critics are applauding these foreign releases: *Symphonic Pastorale* (French), *Murderers Are Among Us* (German), *Oliver Twist* (English), and *Marriage in the Shadows* (German).

# Verse

## White Chapel: After One Year

Around the white boards, pale at night,
creeps the ivy. Shadows from below the cliff,
purple and ashen, night-born, flicker
around the varnished doors. No people,
skin-roughened with labor, sit tiredly, crudely there
in the white chapel. Altar, bare and ungarnished
with wealth, holds a crucifix in the solemn dark
poised for no eyes to see.

And I, far removed from last year's scene,
different from the black-gowned one who preached
in the high pulpit there, because I am a part
of different climate, men and happenings,
remember the evening red shadows
crawling serpentine about the door, the German script
patiently lettered on the homely walls. I recall
images, statues, painted with stained light of window,
and burnt faces looking toward God in hushed
night reverence.

I, remembering these
and the host of little weblike fascinations
of the white chapel, wish that tonight
could carry me there, to myself, one year ago—
to stand in the towering pulpit, view
the vacant seats which once held humble folk
in blue shirts and sharp-creased denim suits
and town ties, to retaste my fantastic memories
in solitude amid the nightness
of a darkened country church.

WALTER RIESS

# Christmas Psalm

Out of the stem unexpectedly blossomed the holiest flower,
Spirited, spreading its far-reaching valiant roots and its branches.

Down from above an aureola flew to its rest in the stable
And with the flight of angelic wings banished the heavy night-shadows.

Come as an infant here, Heaven has sent us a valiant Hero,
Who with His blood-dripping garments would pass through the borders of Edom;

Who would remove the old jungle-growth, trees of injustice and error,
And would provide for the down-trodden hope as the dew of His favor,

Who would bestow the renascence of dawn on the sin-burdened bosom,
Filling with peace all the sorrowing hearts that are dying for water.

Pour out the oil of merriment, joy for the lamp of the spirit,
Welcome with torrents of jubilee Him as our Bridegroom and Savior.

Sprinkle the incense of humbleness into the flame by the handful,
Here comes the Prince of Peace, Bearer of Grace, and so meekly approaching!

Peace to the soul He gives, and on the smarting wound places a poultice,
With wings of blessing He covers the heads which were beaten in bondage.

Cut off the mountaintops! Spread out the branches of pious repentance,
Fervently cast them down on His path, at His feet, royal and holy;

Sing out a paean of victory, leap into songs of rejoicing!
Breaks our salvation's bright Morning Star, there glow the first rays of freedom. . . .

VLADIMIR ROY

(Translated from the Slovak original by Jaroslav Vajda)

# Christmas Eve

Why wonder at those tears tonight
  Which blur the Christmas scene:
The lights, the tree, the candle glow,
The manger Child, the starlit snow;
  Why wonder what they mean?

This must homesick hearts like yours
  Know and feel and see:
That God on Christmas does instill
A glimpse of Paradise which will
  Be yours eternally!

ROBERT SAUER

# The Editor's Lamp

PROBLEMS

CONTRIBUTORS

FINAL NOTES

As has been our custom in previous years in The Cresset, our December issue features "A Christmas Garland" by our Associates.

An examination of the Garlands composed by The Cresset Associates during the years of trouble and war reveals the sensitivity with which our colleagues have interpreted the abiding meaning of the Christmas season amid the trials and changes of the twentieth century.

We believe that our readers will agree with us when we say that the Garland for 1948 reflects a continued concern for that abiding meaning in the confusion of the year now drawing to a close.

Beginning with the New Year there will be a change in the editorial staff of The Cresset. Jaroslav Pelikan, who has served as Assistant to the Editor for the past two years, will become an Associate Editor. His place will be taken by John Strietelmeier, instructor in Geography at Valparaiso University.

Mr. Strietelmeier's work is familiar to many of our readers through his contributions to The Cresset over the years. We welcome him to the staff and wish him every success in his work.

We cannot resist the urge to congratulate our colleague of the Reading Room upon the sportsmanship and good humor with which he is able to treat the late election. Like other members of our staff and many of our readers, he believed that the nod of the electorate would go to Mr. Dewey. The ease with which he can now write of the election results displays the type of calm analysis we like to see in our staff and our readers.

The Cresset Associates and Contributors join with the Editor in wishing our readers a blessed Christmas and a good New Year.